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TWICE A MONTH

Adventure

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W. Townend
L. Patrick Greene
Negley Farson
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Charles Victor Fischer
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Scatter-brained!

No wonder he never accomplishes anything worthwhile!

HIS mind is a hodge-podge of half-baked ideas.

He thinks of a thousand "schemes" to make money quickly—but DOES nothing about ANY of them.

Thoughts flash into and out of his brain with the speed of lightning. New ideas rush in pell-mell, crowding out old ones before they have taken form or shape.

He is SCATTER-BRAINED.

His mind is like a powerful automobile running wild—destroying his hopes, his dreams, his POSSIBILITIES!

He wonders why he does not get ahead. He cannot understand why others, with less ability, pass him in the prosperity parade.

He pities himself, excuses himself, sympathizes with himself.

And the great tragedy is that he has every quality that leads to success—intelligence, originality, imagination, ambition.

His trouble is that he does not know how to USE his brain.

His mental make-up needs an overhauling.

There are millions like him—failures, half-successes—slaves to those with BALANCED, ORDERED MINDS.

It is a known fact that most of us use only one-tenth of our brain power. The other nine-tenths is dissipated into thousands of fragmentary thoughts, in day dreaming, in wishing

We are paid for ONE-TENTH of what we possess because that is all we USE. We are hundred horse-power motors delivering only TEN horse power

What can be done about it?

The reason most people fall miserably below what they dream of attaining in life is that certain mental faculties in them BECOME ABSOLUTELY ATROPHIED THROUGH DISUSE, just as a muscle often does.

If, for instance, you lay for a year in bed, you would sink to the ground when you arose; your leg muscles, UNUSED FOR SO LONG, could not support you.

It is no different with those rare mental faculties which you envy others for possessing. You actually DO possess them, but they are ALMOST ATROPHIED, like unused muscles, simply because they are faculties you seldom, if ever, USE

Be honest with yourself. You know in your heart that you have failed, failed miserably, to attain what you once dreamed of.

Was that fine ambition unattainable? OR WAS THERE JUST SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU? Analyze yourself, and you will see that at bottom THERE WAS A WEAKNESS SOMEWHERE IN YOU.

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Prince Charles of Sweden.

—and others, of equal prominence, too numerous to mention here.

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ADVENTURE
Sept. 8th, 1926

Published twice a month by The Ridgway Company at Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York, N. Y. Yearly subscription $4.00 in advance; single copy 25 cents. Entered as second-class matter Oct. 1, 1910, at the post-office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

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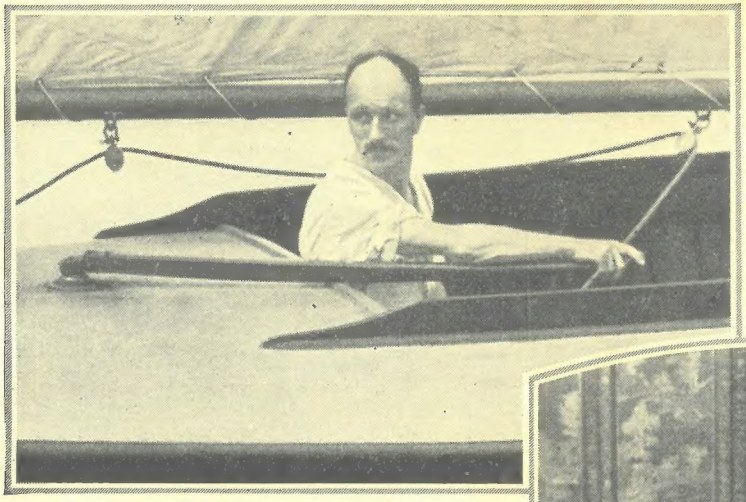

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The editor assumes no risk for manuscripts and illustrations submitted to this magazine, but he will use all due care while they are in his hands.

Contents for September 8th, 1926, Issue

Red *A Complete Novelette* . . . . . **W. Townend** 1
London—A young sailor—and an idea.

Donalds O'Rourk . . . . . **Wilkeson O'Connell** 42
Iroquois Country—The *Snake Weaver* came not for scalps.

Renegade—Resurgam . . . . . **L. Patrick Greene** 52
Africa—One face in the portrait gallery was turned to the wall.

The Wall-Eyed One *A Complete Novelette* . . . . . **Charles Victor Fischer** 64
Land and Sea—The dachshund went to sea.

St. Patrick . . . . . **Post Sargent** 82
Ireland—From slave to bishop.

The New Kind of Sport . . . . . **Raymond S. Spears** 87
Cow Country—*Cole* had walked from New York—and he was armed with a bow!

Chevrons *A Five-Part Story Part III* . . . . . **Leonard H. Nason** 97
World War—The lieutenant ordered *Eadie* to lay the wires.

**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

(Continued on next page)

(*Continued from preceding page*)

The Cannibal . . . . . **David Clarallan, Jr.** 127
Papua—*Hull* was due to drink himself to death.

Tyee . . . . . **Negley Farson** 134
Siwash Salmon Fisheries—The Indians were ignorant enough to pay revenue.

The Traitor . . . . . **Ernest Haycox** 143
Revolutionary War—The Continentals returned *Captain Forrester* to be hanged.

Congo Sun *A Complete Novelette* . . . . . **Ralph R. Perry** 152
Congo—The skipper was not master of his ship.

The Camp-Fire **A free-to-all meeting-place for readers, writers and adventurers** 175

Camp-Fire Stations 183

Various Practical Services Free to Any Reader 183

Old Songs That Men Have Sung 183

Ask Adventure 184
A free question and answer service bureau of information on outdoor life and activities everywhere. Comprising seventy-four geographical sub-divisions, with special sections on Radio, Mining and Prospecting, Weapons, Fishing, Forestry, Aviation, Army Matters, North American Anthropology, Health on the Trail, Herpetology, Railroading and Entomology.

Lost Trails 191

The Trail Ahead 192

Headings . . . . . **W. J. Baumhofer**

Cover Design . . . . . **W. E. Soare**

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THE suave newcomer to the flying field just reeked good-fellowship. And a very competent flyer he proved to be—so good, in fact, that the commander of the field yielded him a point by permitting him to use one of his precious De Havilands for off-duty night flying. "ALARUMS AND AVERSIONS," a complete novelette by Thomson Burtis, will appear in the next issue.

THE mighty castle that overlooked the walls of Antioch housed fabulous treasure. Toward its gold-glinting pinnacles the eyes of the cowardly emperor of the Greeks were directed by a consuming greed. But Sir Hugh, the young Frankish crusader, who for one day had worn the mail and crest of the emperor, scaled the secret mountain passes for a prize more worthy the hand of a warrior. "DURANDAL," a novelette by Harold Lamb, will appear complete in the next issue.

JAMIE JAMIESON, captain, resented having his waterfront crew called yellow-bellied no-goods. They might be that ashore, but at sea—"THE CREW OF THE *DAVID BONE*," a complete novelette by Robert Carse, will appear in the next issue.

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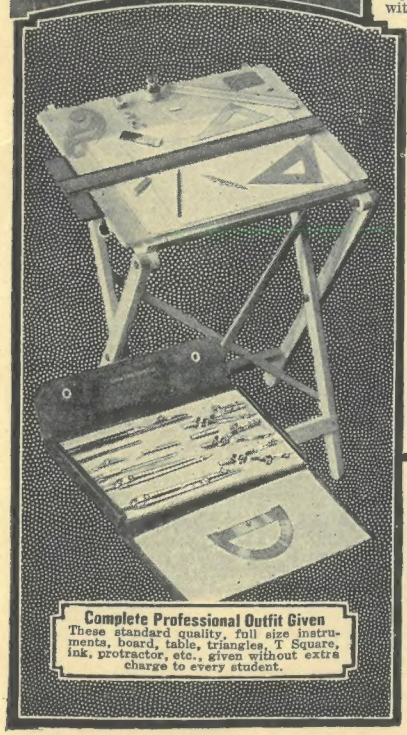

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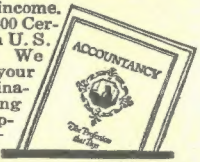

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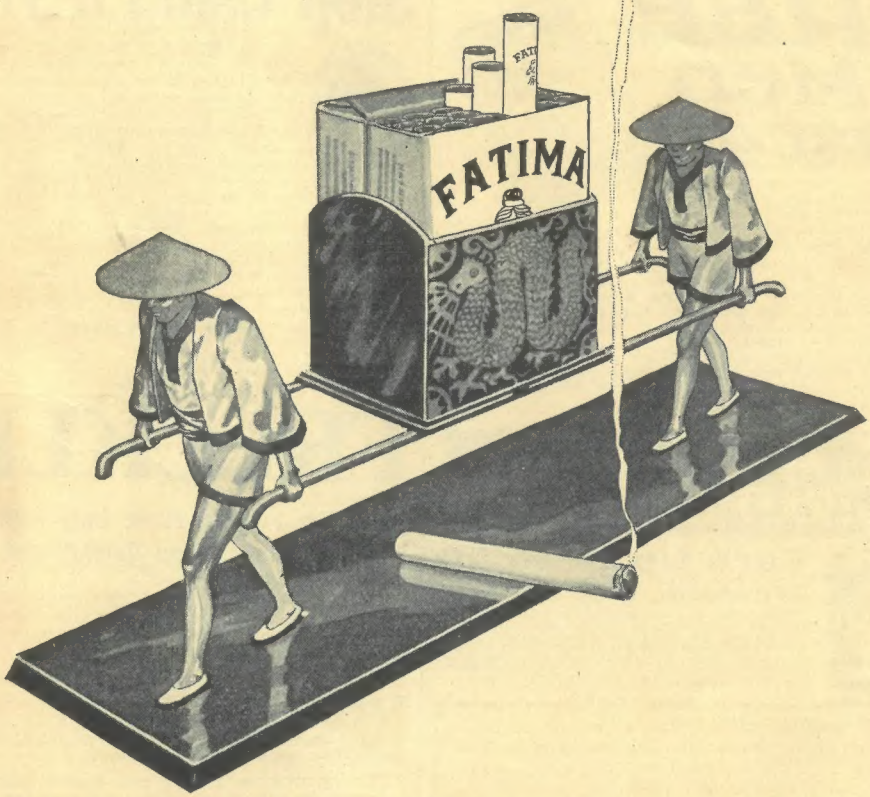

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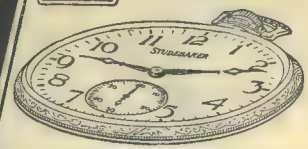

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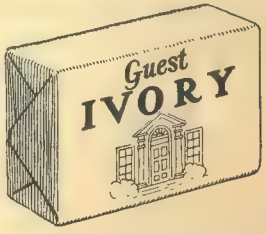

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Adventure VOL·LIX·NO·5·SEPTEMBER 8·1926

RED

A Complete Novelette by W·TOWNEND

Author of "Pratt," "A Light for His Pipe," etc.

"RED" WILSON, aged twenty-one and a rebel, Boston born, of an English father and a Belfast Irish mother, tragedies both, sat on the bitts on the forecastle head of the S. S. *Cape Spartel*, a fifteen-year-old tramp. He stared dreamily across the width of Millwall Dock, London, at the steamer opposite, discharging cargo overside into lighters.

He was wondering why some men should have everything while he had nothing, when an angry voice shouted at him:

"You, Red, what the —— do you think you're doin'?"

Red turned and saw the boatswain, a square, solid man of about forty-five, climbing the ladder that led to the forecastle head from the forward well-deck.

"Didn't I put you to work cleanin' out that focsle, you lazy young swab? What you want is a —— good bootin'. Get up this minute!"

Red rose to his feet. He moved toward the head of the ladder, then halted.

"You've no right to talk like that, anyway!" he said.

"No what!" said the boatswain. His small eyes became two slits, he thrust out his big lower lip and scowled. "No what!" Words failed him. This young feller with the red hair and the freckles needed a lesson.

"Wilson," he said heavily, "you're liable to strike heavy weather before we're out of the dock even. I'm warnin' you once and once only. Any more back chat from you

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an' I'll give you the biggest hidin' you ever 'ad in all your life! Understand what I'm sayin'! I'm a hard case I am, an' the sooner you know it the better!"

"It's always the same," said Red, "always! There's only one argument and that's force!"

The memory of past wrongs—his childhood, the orphanage, his early days at sea—brought a frown to his lean, brown face. Into the pale gray eyes there crept a sullen, hostile look that indicated even more plainly than his speech his discontent.

"Bosun, what right have you or any other man, mate, skipper, ship-owner, any one, to talk that way? One man's as good as another, so you needn't try any of your —— bullying on me, because I won't stand for it! It was through men like you that the rich were able to get at the poor in the first place and keep 'em poor. But you can't do as you like these days, Bosun! You wait! Wait five years, three, maybe, and see what's going to come to you!"

The boatswain drew in his breath with a hissing sound.

"Are you one of them there Socialists?" he asked.

"I am," said Red. "I'm a Red!"

"I thought you was crazy soon as you spoke," said the boatswain. He advanced very close to Red and thrust his clenched fist under his nose. "See that! Smell it! That's some other mug's blood! Like to feel it?"

Red backed nearer the ladder and the boatswain roared.

"You're all alike, you Reds—scared! Now I'm talkin'. You may be as Red as you —— well like ashore, that don't matter a —— to me, but aboard ship you'll keep them opinions to yourself. One man's as good as another, is he? Rubbish! You ain't as good as me, to begin with. And I tell you, Red, if you think the same when we reach New York as you think now, then I ain't the man I thought I was. Understand? You get on with your work an' don't give me no excuse for hittin' you before I got to. Lemme tell you, feller, you're goin' to have the toughest voyage you ever made. You're goin' to wish you'd never seen me, nor signed on aboard the same vessel. Because I warn you, I'm out to break you. See."

"I see," said Red. "I won't touch you, Bosun. You're too old."

"Old!" said the bosun. His face flushed a deep crimson.

Without reflecting that he now stood at the head of the ladder that led down to the forward well-deck, Red avoided his fierce, bull-headed charge by stepping quickly backward. He missed his footing and, after an agonized effort to recover his balance, found himself falling down the ladder. The boatswain, carried away by the momentum of his attack, crashed on top of him and pitched headlong over his shoulders.

Red sat on the steel deck-plates, shaken and half stunned, and stared blankly about him. And then he saw the boatswain lying face downward between the ladder and the No. 1 hatch.

"Perhaps that'll teach you," he said.

Two of the other deck-hands and a fireman were watching.

"Shouldn't wonder, Red, if you'd croaked 'im," said the fireman.

Red stood up.

"He tried to lay me out and we fell!" he explained.

He saw the trickle of blood from the boatswain's head.

"Here," he said, "give me a hand!"

The boatswain opened his eyes as they propped him against the ladder.

"All right," he said. "All right, Red. I know now what kind of a —— swine you are! You jus' wait!"

Presently he caught hold of the hand-rail of the ladder and helped himself to his feet and walked slowly aft toward the bridge deck and his own quarters.

"That feller means mischief," said one of the deck-hands.

"You'd better not have touched him," said the other. "He's bad!"

Red uttered a short laugh.

"I never did touch him. But if you know any one who wants a ship, here's his chance. I'm through."

Ten minutes later he had changed into his best clothes and had walked ashore.

II

MacTAVISH, a tow-headed Scots deckhand, sat at a table in a public house in West Ferry Road, Isle of Dogs. He was talking with an affable stranger named Deacon, who traveled in manufacturer's samples from door to door.

"Trade ain't all that it might be, or

course," he said, "but seeing I'm getting rich fast as I can, I'm not complaining!"

MacTavish was impressed.

"An' hoo wud a fella set aboot findin' a job like you got?" he asked.

A wide knowledge of the riverside had made Mr. Deacon cautious how he took strangers into his confidence. For all he knew this small Scotsman with the pale face and the round blue eyes and the flattish mouth might be one of these here policemen in plain clothes. So he said:

"It's 'ard to say. It costs money to start with."

"I've got some money," said MacTavish in a husky whisper.

Red Wilson, leaning against the wall near the window, a mug of beer in his hand, grinned.

The Scotsman was asking for trouble. Nothing surer.

Mr. Deacon twisted the ends of his waxed mustache.

"Ah!" he said. "Well, now you're talking."

"I've had ma fill o' the sea," said MacTavish. "I'm gaun to live on dry land, Mr. Deacon!"

"Then you're makin' a mistake," said Mr. Deacon. "A sailor's life is a healthy life, anyhow. Just think o' me, stewing in London all through the summer, or perishing with cold in the winter, draggin' around on me pore ol' feet, while you're at sea, enjoyin' advantages that rich people—millionaires—are willing to pay 'undreds of pounds for. You're lucky."

Rather to his own surprize, Red broke into the conversation.

"I'm a sailor," he said. "I'd like to ask where you get that junk about rich people paying hundreds of pounds for advantages you have at sea."

" 'Aven't you never seen the adverts of them tourist trips around the world? Posters in r'ilw'y stations with blue skies an' natives an' palm trees an' big liners?" Mr. Deacon closed one eye and wagged his head roguishly. "Ah, you sailors! I know yer. Wives in every port—beautiful native girls—houris of the East."

"I've never seen any rich people going for trips in tramp steamers," said Red, "nor did I ever hear of a millionaire enjoying the advantages of four hours on, four off. However, maybe you know different."

Mr. Deacon's greasy, unwholesome face took on a shade of pink, his lips twitched under his waxed mustache.

Red seated himself on the bench by the side of MacTavish and said—

"What have you and I to do with rich people, eh, Mr. Deacon?"

"Some day, not so far off, neither, all bein' well, I 'ope to be taking a trip on one of them there big liners myself. And you'll, maybe, see me smoking fat cigars with the captain and ordering another bottle of fizz for the ladies. Ah! That's me, Joe Deacon, three, four years from now. Among the nobs."

He tilted his hard felt hat to the back of his bald head and smacked his lips. His watery eyes twinkled. He gave his mustache an upward twist.

"I can do all that because I'm going to be rich! What's more, you could be rich, too, if you wanted. Mr. MacTavish 'ere is coming in on a scheme I got for makin' a fortune. Why don't you come in, too?"

MacTavish scratched his chin.

"Mr. Deacon, you spoke o' draggin' aroon' on your puir feet! That disna luk muckle like makin' a fortune!"

"That's only my way of speakin'! I've got a car, of course, a beauty. But I can't go round this part o' London in a —— big limousine, wearing too many diamonds—" he extended a rather grimy finger on which was a ring with a big diamond that twinkled in the light from the window by his side—"too many diamonds or a top hat, now can I? It wouldn't be safe! I could if I wanted to. I'm rich now, all through usin' my wits!"

He called to the barman.

"George, my lad, three more pints o' the best!"

The tough-looking young barman brought the beer.

"My shout," said Red.

He paid. Mr.Deacon offered no objection but smiled graciously.

"Good health!" said Red.

"May I ask your name, mister?" said Mr. Deacon.

"Wilson. Red Wilson."

"Well, Mr. Wilson, good 'ealth! 'Ere's 'appy days!"

Mr. Deacon drank thirstily, making a gurgling noise in his throat. He set down his pewter mug on the table and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, smacking his lips afterwards.

"MAYBE you wonder why I'm offerin' you two young fellers the chance o' making a bit o' money. Well, it's jus' because I've taken a fancy to you. But I must have some kind o' financial guarantee first, o' course!"

"How do you mean, financial guarantee?" said Red.

"Five pounds!" said Mr. Deacon.

"Five poon's!" said MacTavish sharply. "Whaur dae ye think I'm gaun to get five poon's frae the noo? A' I got in the warl' is seventeen shillings an' saxpence."

Mr. Deacon looked thoughtful. He stroked the top of his bald head with his hand, removing his hard hat for the purpose. He replaced his hat and said solemnly:

"Mr. Wilson, suppose now you was to help MacTavish here make up the five pounds. What's five pounds to a sailor? Nothin'."

"The sailors you meet must be different from any I've met," said Red dryly. "I haven't five shillings, let alone five pounds. I haven't even a ship."

"Hem!" said Mr. Deacon. "We can't do the impossible, can we? But you'll 'ave your chance, Mr. MacTavish, all the same. Give me the seventeen an' six, for a start, an' we'll proceed to business."

Red watched the Scotsman fumbling in his trouser pockets.

"Hang on, Mac," he said. "There's something I want to ask. Mr. Deacon, how do you think MacTavish or any one else is going to get rich down this part, in the Isle of Dogs?"

"Isn't the money you get from these 'ere people as good as the money you'd get anywhere? It is, o' course. Small profits, Mr. Wilson, an' quick returns." He patted the greasy waistcoat that covered his plump little stomach. "I know what I'm talkin' about."

"You know you're a liar, you mean!" said Red. "You're going to get seventeen shillings and sixpence out of MacTavish here under false pretences. You're not rich. Your line of business is selling goods to poor men's wives for more than they can afford to pay. So much down, so much a week, and their kids must go short of food till they're out of your debt or you'll tell their husbands. You're a crook, Deacon! A cheap crook!"

"Dod!" said MacTavish. "Who tellt ye that, Red?"

"No one. The man's a swindler on the face of it."

"Go slow, chum," said the barman. "We don't want no trouble 'ere."

"I could 'ave the law on you, talkin' like that!" said Mr. Deacon.

"Law!" said Red, now thoroughly aroused. "Law! There's law in this —— country, yes: but there's no justice. There's law for the rich—policemen, lawyers, judges —but there's no —— justice, not for the likes o' me and MacTavish here. I'm a deck-hand, I am, an A. B. What chance have I got of saving a bit o' money and having a bit o' comfort? None, by ——! No —— chance at all."

He brought his fist down with a crash on the table.

"Mind them glasses!" said the plump landlady severely.

"I tell you, honesty don't pay. If I was crooked like Deacon, I might go ahead. But I'm not crooked. See! That's why I'm poor and always will be. And that's why I'm a Red and proud of it."

There was a short silence.

"Man," said MacTavish, "gi'e us yer haun'. Ye're a bonny talker. It's pit an edge to ma thirst jist hearin' ye. George, beer!"

Mr. Deacon was looking crushed.

"Naturally, being a Red, you don't see no good in the way I'm pushin' ahead. But it takes all sorts to make a world, don't it? That's my motto, anyhow. Capitalists an' Socialists an' Bolshies an' Workers. I like you, Red, an' barring the fact I don't agree with one word in ten you say, you're a man after my own 'eart. Got any plans in view?"

"Except I'm not going in with you in any get-rich-quick scheme, no!"

The stout landlady, behind the mahogany bar, and George, the barman, and the three or four sailors, who had been listening gravely to what was said, began to laugh.

"I know that, Red," said Mr. Deacon humbly, "an' it does you credit to stand by your principles. 'Ave you ever met Alf Coley?"

"I've not," said Red, "and if he's any way like you, I don't want to!"

"He's not like me, Red," said Mr. Deacon, "but we're pals. He's a Red, same as yourself. Go an' see him. If 'e likes you, he'll maybe give you a job—something to do.

with the cause. He's after recruits always. Go to Well Close Square, Red, near London Dock. I 'aven't got his address, but that don't make no difference. Every one knows Alf Coley round that part, everyone's friends with 'im. You go to Well Close Square an' keep enquirin' till some one tells you where you can find 'im. When you see 'im, tell 'im his old pal, Joe Deacon, sent you an' said he was to do 'is best for you."

Red was astounded. He wondered if what he said had made Mr. Deacon ashamed.

"He'll be a friend to you," said Mr. Deacon. "I done 'im a service once an' he doesn't forget. I want to do you a good turn, honest I do. It's not often I meet a young feller like you that's got the courage of 'is convictions, 'owever misguided, an' Coley's the one man in London I know can help you."

Red had a sudden overwhelming assurance that Alf Coley represented understanding, faith in the ultimate triumph of a righteous cause, honesty, companionship, good fellowship.

"I guess maybe I'll take your advice," he said. "If Coley's a Red, I'll go to him right now."

THE door was flung open and half a dozen, half-drunk deckhands and firemen from the *Cape Spartel* clattered noisily into the barroom, singing, shoving each other about, lurching from side to side.

"What's to do!" said the landlady. "Not so much of it."

A deck-hand pointed at Red and broke into a shout of laughter.

"——, there's Red. Red, there's someone arter you."

"Who?" said Red.

"Chips. He ses he'll kill you for smashin' up the bosun."

"I never touched the bosun," said Red. "How many times have I got to say it?"

Again the door opened, this time very slowly.

The men at the bar, the landlady, George, MacTavish, standing by the table, Mr. Deacon and Red, still seated, all turned and waited.

And then the carpenter of the *Cape Spartel* appeared.

He stood in the doorway, very squat and wide and angry, his cap on the back of his domed head, his narrow eyes fierce and threatening danger, his mouth twisted under his big black mustache.

"So you're here, are ye." He advanced slowly toward the center of the barroom. "You, Red, do you intend to come aboard or don't you?"

"No," said Red, getting up from the bench. "I certainly don't. Thank you for your kind enquiries, Chips, all the same."

"All right! Well, thank God, I know how to deal with fellers like you. You're comin' aboard, if I 'ave to put you to sleep an' carry you. You laid out the bosun by kickin' 'is feet from under 'im, but you won't lay out ol' Bob Martin. I'm a man, I am. You watch."

The men at the bar howled their delight.

"George," said the landlady, "throw that old loafer out! The young man ain't doing no harm."

George moved forward dubiously.

"Ahtside!" he blustered.

The carpenter planted a big hand on George's face and straightened his arm suddenly.

George plunged backward against MacTavish.

MacTavish bellowed and, standing on one foot, put both his hands on George's shoulders and thrust him with all his might in the direction of the carpenter, now in a fighting attitude, scowling and sparring and tapping the floor with his left foot.

Red, smiling to himself—how comic they all were when they were serious!—saw a look of apprehension in George's pale face. But as he was flung forward by the impetus of MacTavish's arms he hit out fiercely.

More by good luck, it seemed, than by any actual intention or aim, his fist caught the carpenter on the point of the chin.

Together, scuffling, hitting and kicking, they crashed over a bench into a corner by the window.

Red walked slowly toward the door.

"Good night, all," he said. "So long, MacTavish, don't you drink any more. You've had enough. And don't you go giving your money away to the first deadbeat that asks for it. Understand. Use some intelligence. And some of you guys had better take Chips home. He's too old to go playing the fool like this. He's going to be hurt. Let up, George, you're hurting him!"

As Red opened the door Mr. Deacon called to him.

"You'll go an' see Alf Coley, won't you?"

"Why, yes," said Red, "I guess I will!"

"Give 'im my love, won't you. Tell 'im his old pal, Joe Deacon, sent you. Tell 'im he can't do too much for you. Say you're a Red."

"You bet!" said Red lightly.

Mr. Deacon laughed.

III

ONCE upon a time when ships could pass into or out of West India Docks either by way of Limehouse or Blackwall Reach, the Isle of Dogs might have justified its designation, technically or geographically, at least. But not now. The entrances from Limehouse Reach are no longer usable. Properly speaking, then, the Isle of Dogs is a drab and sterile peninsula, a promontory, thickly populated, about a mile across at its widest part, around which the River Thames makes a circular bend.

Parallel with the river is a long cobble-paved thoroughfare that extends from Blackwall in the East to Limehouse in the West. This street is known on the easterly or Cubitt Town side of the Isle of Dogs as Manchester Road, and on the westerly or Millwall side as West Ferry Road. The change of name takes place at the fire station at the junction with East Ferry Road running almost due south toward the horse ferry.

When Red Wilson left the public house where the carpenter and George, the barman, were fighting, he walked north along West Ferry Road, his hands thrust deep in his trouser pockets, his brown, freckled face set in a frown, his eyes glancing warily from side to side.

The ugliness of his surroundings appalled him. Perhaps his one joy in life up to now had been the beauty of the sea and sky—the gold and crimson magic of sunsets in the Pacific, the first mother-of-pearl and opal glimmer of the dawn after a foggy night, homeward bound up Channel toward Dungeness—the blazing stars of the Indian Ocean, Constantinople seen in the light of a full moon from the deck of some old tramp, San Francisco Bay on a summer evening with the lights of the city shining against the blue, Rio de Janeiro, Sydney, New South Wales, Vancouver, Table Bay.

Here in the Isle of Dogs was the abomination and desolation of brown brick and mortar, and slate roofs and gray stone cobbles, and yellow chimney pots, and poverty and hopelessness and misery. Here also would there be work for Alf Coley or men like him.

Red crossed the swing bridge at the entrance to Millwall Dock, through which that night the *Cape Spartel* must pass on her way to the Thames and the open sea.

The sun now declining into the west cast long shadows across the street. The sky was blue-veiled by a haze of smoke. There was an unexpected freshness in the southwest wind.

On his left hand was the river, hidden from view by ugly brick walls—engineering works, machine shops, store yards with big doors, small houses, shops and metal oil tanks with pyramids of wooden oil barrels. On his right hand were more small houses, more small shops, public-houses, dining-rooms, fried fish bars, such as he had seen scores of times before, hundreds of times, in every seaport he had touched at.

And on his right hand, also, there opened out of West Ferry Road at right angles short, dusty streets. Women stood at the open doorways of the houses that had a ground floor and one upper story only, children played and shouted and quarreled and screamed and were, apparently, happy even here, poor little devils!

The names of these short, dusty streets attracted Red's attention.

Janet Street, Maria Street.

He wondered what manner of girls they had been.

Janet and Maria, one dark and the other fair. Sailors had fallen in love with them, of course. Their mothers had been suspicious of sweethearting. They weren't to be seen talking with common seamen. Mates, perhaps, there would be no objection to; the mates of clipper ships, outward bound, bound to the Colonies by way of the Cape. Malabar Street—bound for the Malabar Coast, perhaps. Why not? Tooke Street—who the —— was Tooke? Maria's father or Janet's father? Or had Tooke, Captain Tooke, maybe, married Maria and broken Janet's heart?

He recalled having seen a pub—the Tooke Arms. Tooke, then, to have a pub named after him, must have been a man of property. A capitalist. Perhaps he had made money

running slaves from the Ivory Coast or Gold Coast across to New England. Perhaps he had been a skipper of a Blackwall frigate who had made money, as skippers did make money even these days, and had settled down to a life of ease.

Red laughed to himself. What a mind. Like some of the store yards he had passed, full of junk.

Havana Street. Ah, there was the sea again. Havana, cigars, molasses, rum, sugar! Byng Street. Which Byng? The admiral they had shot for losing a battle or the other guy? Byng Street, with gates at the far end, dock gates, of course—Millwall Dock.

A smallish, thick-set man, much the worse for liquor, came lurching along the sidewalk, mumbling to himself. A man with a pinched face and red eyes and an unshaven chin. With him, holding him by the arm, was his wife, a large woman, with a flushed face and brave eyes and a bruise on her cheek.

"Not far now before you're 'ome, Bert," she said. "An' then I'll give yer a nice cup o' tea."

The man took his hands out of his pockets and pushed her off the sidewalk into the gutter. She staggered and to save her from falling Red caught hold of her by the arm.

The man halted.

"Wha' you doin' wi' my wife?" he asked.

"Nothing," said Red. "No harm done."

"No," said the man. He seemed suddenly indifferent to Red's presence. He turned on the woman and said "Go 'ome!" And then once more he shoved her violently, much as MacTavish had shoved George, the barman, and again Red saved her.

"Don't, Bert, please," said the woman. "Don't!"

Red was angry. The thought flashed into his mind: What would Alf Coley do here? Would he be content to stand aside and watch this little swab manhandle a woman? No. Alf Coley would help her, and so would he.

"You touch your wife again," said Red, "and I'll lick you!"

"I beg your parding," said the woman. "Are you addressin' my husbing?" With a deft twist of her plump, red wrist she removed a long hat pin from her wreck of a hat.

Her husband stared first at Red, then at his wife. Then he uttered a howl of delight and clapped his hands and began jumping from one foot to the other and shrieking advice and encouragement.

"Go for 'im, Sal! Sock 'is jaw for 'im! Show 'im what you done to the policeman. Use yer 'at pin. Sock 'im, Sal! Put 'is lights out!"

Already a small crowd had gathered, mainly women and children.

Public sympathy was clearly with husband and wife.

Red, feeling foolish, stood his ground.

AND then a strong hand gripped him by the elbow an pushed him to one side and a tipsy voice said gravely:

"Be off wi' ye, the pair o' ye, an' when ye're in yer ain hame, gang ye doon on yer knees an' pray fur furgi'eness. No argyments. I winna listen. Come on, Red, we'll e'en continue on oor way to civilization."

MacTavish slid his arm through Red's and led him off, talking placidly.

"Aye, it's yer auld frien', MacTavish. I've been chasin' ye the length o' West Ferry Road this past ten minutes. Ha'e ye no mair sense than to gang interferin' wi' husban' an' wife? Dinna ye ken thon's the way they ha'e o' love makin'? Man, what a weary desert is the Isle o' Dugs."

"That's all right, Mac. But what are you doing here?"

"I'm gaun to accompany ye, Red, whaurever—hic!"—MacTavish apologized—"that wis the bacon. It didna agree wi' me. I'm gaun to accompany ye whaurever ye gang. I'm gaun to luk efter ye. Man, that wis a braw speech ye mad'."

"What speech?"

"Efter ye laid oot the carpenter in thon pub wi' a richt uppercut. The police are searchin ye far an' wide."

"Don't be an ass. I didn't touch the carpenter."

"Then ye maun prove to the contrairy. Let me warrn ye, Red, in the Isle o' Dugs a man's aye guilty till he can prove himsel' innocent by the aid o' his frien's. But dinna fret, laddie, I'll work up an alibi fur ye if I ha'e to perjure ma immortal soul. I'm a Red at heart, same as yersel', the spite o' what I said to auld Deacon. Lead on, Macduff! Yince mair into the breach, dear frien's, yince mair! Thon's Shakespeare's 'Hamlet.' Wullie wis no the man

Rabbie Burns wis, but he's got a gey uncommon gift o' the gab. Whaur dae we gang frae here, laddie—hame?"

"Listen, MacTavish. Haven't you anything to do?"

"Aye, I ha'e that. But I'm gaun to dae it wi' you. Ne'er let it be said that a MacTavish wis no' gratefu' for a kindness. Ye savit me an' ma seventeen an' sixpence frae the haun's o' the Amalekites an' I winna desairt ye, noo ye're in trouble."

And what could a man say to a fool like this?

For some time they walked steadily on in silence. They crossed the old swing bridge, no longer in use, of South Dock and passed along Bridge Road, between high brick walls. Neither spoke. From time to time MacTavish hiccoughed and sighed deeply. They crossed another swing bridge that spanned the old entrance from Limehouse Reach to Limehouse Basin and West India Dock and descended the cobbled slope between warehouses and engineering works and the dock wall.

"Man," said MacTavish, "ye're a terrible fast walker. Did ye e'er think o' the auld sayin': 'A rinnin' hen lays nae eggs.' Ha'e pity on me. But I winna desairt ye, laddie. I winna. Hic! Thon's the bacon again. Hic! Man, ye maun stop. Hic! Losh, I'm in sair straits the noo."

Red slackened speed.

"Thank God for that," said MacTavish. "I was afeart ye wis in fur yin o' thur Marathons."

They had turned to the right and were walking up Garford Street, with neat, small houses on their left and on their right the high wall of some engineering works. Ahead of them was the railway bridge.

They passed the church and came to a row of small cottages with green doors and green woodwork to the windows and small gardens and wooden railings.

A young girl stood at a gate.

MacTavish stopped and raised his cap.

"Weel, Jessie," he said, "an' hoo are ye?"

The girl flushed pink and drew away from the palings.

MacTavish, beaming, pushed open the gate.

The girl retreated toward the house and called—

"Dad!"

A big, broad-shouldered man appeared in the doorway and scowled.

"Do you know my daughter?" he said.

"I ha'ena seen her afore in ma life," said MacTavish. "But, man, she's awfu' like ma mother when she wis a lassie. That was afore ma time, sae I'm gaun on hearsay. I'll bide a wee an' ha'e a talk wi' her aboot auld times."

"Oh, come on out of it," said Red crossly. "Come on, man!"

The girl's father was angry.

"You'd best take that drunken friend of yours out of here or I'll call the police."

"Ye wudna dae that, Mr. MacDougal, I hope."

"My name's not MacDougal!"

"It's the same thing almost," said MacTavish.

Red tugged at his arm.

"Come on out of it, you fool!"

"Aye," said MacTavish, "like *Enoch Arden* I returrn hame to find the only lass I e'er loved anither's. A-weel, I maun e'en be brave. Fare ye weel, Jessie, an' may ye be happy, which I can ne'er be again. Fare ye weel."

The girl began to titter.

Red dragged MacTavish away.

At the railway bridge they halted.

"Here's where we separate," said Red. "I'm through with you. Which way are you going, Mac?"

MacTavish pointed a trembling finger toward the West India Dock Road.

"Very good," said Red. "Off you go, then. I'm staying here."

"Winna ye say guid-by to yer auld frien'?" said MacTavish.

He held out his hand.

"Good-by," said Red.

"We'll meet afore lang," said MacTavish. "I feel it in ma bones."

He turned and moved slowly away, his shoulders bowed, as if a sorrow too deep for mere words had overwhelmed him.

IV

WHEN Red had walked a short distance toward West India Dock gate he halted outside the Jamaica Hotel and looked back toward the railway bridge.

MacTavish was nowhere in sight.

He would, he decided, give him ten minutes or so grace and then he would follow up West India Dock Road to Commercial Road East, where he would be able to get a bus that would take him toward Aldgate.

The conductor would tell him the way to Well Close Square, near which Alf Coley lived.

On the opposite side of the street, outside the Maritime Hall, the headquarters of the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, a small crowd had gathered to listen to a man making a speech — a short, shabby man with a pale, unwholesome face and a sharp pointed nose and swollen eyelids and a scrubby fair mustache.

As Red crossed the street, there was a subdued, half-hearted laugh.

"That's right!" said the speaker, who wore a flaming scarlet tie, "you laugh if you want to laugh, but I'm tellin' the truth. You're fools! You're treated like dogs, and you don't say nothing, you don't do nothing. An' when I take the trouble to p'int out where you're wrong, you laugh at me. They laughed at Lenin. Why don't you look in the glass an' laugh at yerselves."

"Chadwick," said one of the men near Red, "why ain't you at 'ome, helpin' the missus wash the kids an' put 'em to bed?"

This time the laughter was louder and less repressed.

The man with the swollen eyelids and the scrubby fair mustache raised his voice.

"That's the w'y always. If you're beaten in argument you try an' be funny. What's come to you? Aren't I givin' up time an' money to 'elp you? Where's your gratitude?"

"Money!" said the man who had spoken before. "You never parted with any money in your life, Chadwick; don't tell me. You give me a tanner to buy a drink an' I'll have some respect for you. You want us to go on strike again, don't you? I went on strike at Freemantle because I was told to, and I've been on my uppers ever since. What's that to you? Nothing! There's more seamen than jobs an' you know it an' the skippers know it an' the union knows it an' the ship-owners know it."

The man with the yellow mustache seemed taken aback. He said querulously, without any of his former fire:

"If you fellers did what you promised you'd do, there'd have been a diff'rent story. But you messed about any'ow an' then when things were goin' your w'y at last you just quit. Do you know what's wrong with you? So long as you've got what you want, other people don't count, that's what. They don't count. So long as you got what you want. See! The cause can look arter itself. That's why the ship-owners beat you always."

"What you want is a slap on the jaw, Chadwick."

Red could keep quiet no longer. Indignation overcame his sense of caution.

Here was an enthusiast whom Alf Coley would have been proud to work with.

"That'll do, you," he said to the man who had interrupted. "Now, listen to me, the lot of you. Cut out the rough stuff and have some sense. Unless we stand together— sailors, firemen, stewards — and show the ship-owners and the capitalists we're united, then there's no hope. I'm not a swell speaker like our friend, Chadwick, here, but I'm a Red and I'm in earnest and I've got no ax to grind like some men. I've had a bad time in the world, so have you. I'm poor, so are you. I'm desperate, so are you. I'll tell you what's wrong: there's no security for you or me, no comfort, nothing but hard work and hard words.

"We're put upon. That's the trouble: put upon by ship-owners and the men under 'em —captains and mates and engineers, bosuns and such like scum. We've not got a say in our lives, even. What right have we to a job? No right. To hear 'em talk you'd think they're doin' us favors by lettin' us work aboard their —— ships at all. I know what I'm talking about, and so do you. All of you! I tell you, friends, the way this country's run and every other country, too, except Russia, is all wrong. What we ought to do is to support the union, put some life into the men at the head of the union, stand by them, show them they've got to lead, not just talk and we'll follow, and win out. Action is what we want, not just words.

And then Chadwick shouted angrily:

"What are you crackin' on for? You, with the red 'air! We don't want the union. We want to run things ourselves. What d'you mean, comin' 'ere interferin'? Are you tryin' to make things 'ard for me, or what?"

"Nothing of the kind," said Red. "Nothing of the kind. I've been trying to help you. What do you mean?"

"What do I mean? I mean that you're in the pay of the ship-owners. You came 'ere to make trouble for me. You're a hired thug, that's what you are—a thug, in the pay of the ship-owners—"

A husky voice interrupted:

"That's a lie, a —— lie!" MacTavish forced his way through the crowd. "I'll fecht the best man here fur a shilling, an' I'll thraw him wi' the yella mustache in fur make-weight. Wha's takin' ma offer?"

"Hook it, fellers! Here's a policeman."

Chadwick stalked off toward the railway bridge and the station.

MacTavish made after him, dragging Red by the arm.

"Come on, Red," he said. "He's a bad man, thon fella. We maun tak' care he disna get the better of us."

"If you want trouble, I don't," said Red. "Haven't you got any sense at all?"

CHADWICK stood at the entrance to the booking office.

"That was a —— rotten trick. he said. "What did you do it for? What did you go spoutin' that —— nonsense for? That bunch of stiffs was good for a couple o' bob, maybe five, an' you come buttin' in spoilin' everything."

"You mean you were out for money!" said Red.

"Do I mean I was out for money!" sneered Chadwick. "Of course I was. I've got to live the same as you 'ave, 'aven't I? I'll give you a piece of advice. Jealousy don't get a man nowhere. You did me out o' my money, but what did you make yourself? Nothin'!"

"Shall I fecht him?" said MacTavish.

"Let the swine be," said Red.

"I ain't finished with you yet," said Chadwick. "Don't you think it. You got the better o' me this time, but next time we meet, you stand from under."

Red put his hands in his pockets and walked slowly under the railway bridge past the Salvage Corps Station and turned to the left past King Street up the West India Dock Road.

What would Coley have said, had he found Chadwick to be a crook as bad in his degree as Deacon? He pondered.

"Red," said MacTavish, "ye done fine! Thon wis a mair sensible speech than ye mad' efter ye knockit oot the carpenter. Ahem! Whit say to a drink ower thonder at Charlie Brown's?"

"I've told you before," said Red. "Let me alone."

"I winna desairt ma frien' when he's in trouble," said MacTavish. "If ye wish prosperity, ye maun let me stay wi' ye. Fur, marrk ye, I'm a MacTavish frae Clydebank wi' a thirrst on me I wudna part wi' fur hauf a croon."

Red kept on his way, past Pennyfields, along the crowded footpath, past the police station with its archway and blue lamp and steps, toward Commercial Road East.

MacTavish, still talking, and his topic was now the solidarity of the working classes and the iniquity of ship-owners and second mates, trotted beside him.

"Anither Marathon," he said presently. "A-weel, I'll lay thae auld bones doon an' dee, if ye dinna ha'e pity on me."

And then he stopped outside an outfitter's shop in front of which there hung on an iron framework sea-boots and oilskins and suits of clothes and shoes and overcoats.

"Bide yin meenit, wull ye, Red?"

A prosperous-looking young salesman with dark curly hair and a fleshy nose smiled at him.

"Ith there anything you vant?"

"Aye," said MacTavish. "Ha'e ye got sic a thing as a spare propeller ye cud sell me? I'm wantin' yin fur the *Cape Spartel*, layin in Millwall Dock. We droppit oors in the Channel hameward boon' a' through the chief engineer's incompetence an' ineffeeciency. I'd tak' it as a favor, Ike, if ye cud load it on a haun' cart an' get it aboard by the morn's morn'. The skipper's in an awfu' state o' mind. Puir fella, his wife's jus' presentit him wi' twins an' he's no responsible."

Red hurried on. He had a foreboding that unless he managed to shake off this Scotsman he would never be able to reach Alf Coley that night.

Glancing back over his shoulder to see if MacTavish were following, he saw Chadwick a few paces behind.

He grinned at him.

"No good, Chadwick! Better give up."

"You go to blazes!" said Chadwick, still keeping up with him. "I told yer I 'adn't finished with you. I 'aven't."

The man's unwholesome, puffy face expressed a kind of weak anger that seemed partly fear.

"You're crazy!" said Red. "If I was to hit you once you'd croak. You're too soft, Chadwick, that's what's the matter with you. All you're good for is to talk to men better than yourself and show 'em what

you'd do if you'd only guts enough to go to sea same as they do."

"That's all you know," said Chadwick. "I'm an A. B. an' I could go to sea tomorrer if I wanted."

"But you don't want, eh?" said Red. "Don't blame you, either. It's no life for a white-livered rat like you, anyway." He halted. "You give me any more trouble and I'll turn you over my knee and spank you. Understand! Beat it!" He clenched his fists as if to hit and Chadwick ducked and backed away from him.

Red turned with a laugh and walked on.

At the Eastern Hotel, where the West India Dock and East India Dock Roads join and become Commercial Road East, he halted once more.

A BIG red motor bus, bound for the Bank and Oxford Street, drew up noisily near where he stood.

"Let 'em off first," said the conductor. "Let 'em off!"

Red watched the people climbing on to the step, jostling each other, and pushing. How rough they were. Why couldn't they take their time! But that was life. No courtesy. No giving each other a chance. Each for himself, or herself. The women were worse than the men.

A husky voice called to him despairingly.

"Laddie, ye winna desairt an auld shipmate in trouble."

"One more!" said the conductor.

Red saw over his shoulder the pale, thin face and tow-colored hair of MacTavish.

"Get out!" he said and caught hold of the brass hand-rail that led to the top of the bus. "Let me be." MacTavish had clutched at his arm.

Chadwick pushed roughly past Red and jumped on to the rear platform with a laugh.

"Full up!" said the conductor and rang the bell.

"Chadwick, you swine, come on down, or I'll fetch you down."

"Hey, laddie, you an' me maun wait fur the next bus," said MacTavish.

The bus moved off.

Red shook himself free of MacTavish.

"Get out of it, Mac."

As he began to climb the steps after Chadwick the conductor, who was already inside the bus, emerged, red-faced and indignant, being a rather consequential, fussy young man without much tact or experience of human nature.

"What are you doin'?" he said sharply. "Didn't I tell you the bus was full up?"

"You said one more," said Red. "I was getting on the bus when that grinning fool up there got in front of me. Chadwick, come on down."

Above the noise of the traffic he heard Chadwick's laugh and the husky voice of MacTavish yelling:

"Stop! ye've ta'en ma auld frien'. Stop!"

The conductor caught hold of Red's arm and hauled. Red descended the three steps he had climbed and landed unsteadily on his feet on the rear platform.

"That's a —— silly trick to play," he said. "You'd no right to touch me."

The conductor had jerked the bell rope and the bus was stopping.

"I said it was full up. Get off!"

"That's right, conductor," said Chadwick. "Give 'im in charge. 'E's no good, that feller. Give 'im in charge."

MacTavish arrived at a run. He tried to clamber on to the platform by Red's side.

"Full up, you," said the conductor angrily. Then, disregarding MacTavish, he tried to put Red off. Red clutched at his arm.

Once more a crowd of spectators had gathered.

Chadwick stood at the top of the steps. He banged his hand hard down on the bell push twice and the driver, obedient to the signal, started the bus.

"Chadwick, ye low hoond, whit the —— are ye daein'?"

Red and the conductor, holding each other, rolled off the rear platform, staggered, lost their balance and fell, side by side, in the gutter.

MacTavish tugged at the bell rope and ran up the steps after Chadwick, who hit at him.

Once again the bus stopped.

Red struggled to his knees. The conductor had hold of him about the waist.

"Let go, you fool," said Red.

Exerting all his strength, he rose to his feet, dragging the conductor with him.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw Chadwick and MacTavish come tumbling down the steps from the top of the bus, fighting. He tried to shake himself free of the conductor's arms.

"Let go, can't you!" he said. "What

d'you think you're doing, you great ass."

"I'm going to give you in charge!" shouted the conductor.

And suddenly he loosed his grip about Red's body and hit at his face. The blow grazed his cheek.

The crowd, growing rapidly in numbers, yelled.

Red was bitter. He had been assaulted for no reason. This —— little tick was like any one else in a uniform, cap and brass buttons—a bully. They were all the same—mates, second mates, skippers, engineers, each one of 'em—bus conductors as well: bullies.

He stooped quickly, just as the conductor tried to hit him again, grabbed his ankles and threw him on to his back.

"Police!" A woman was screaming. "Police!"

"Hook it, feller, here's a copper!" said a man. "This way, quick."

Red saw MacTavish grinning at Chadwick, who sat on the curb, trying to check the flow of blood from his nose and cursing.

An elderly man with a gray beard said:

"Chadwick, I thought I'd lost you. I've something to say to you."

"Leave me alone, —— you!" said Chadwick.

Some one seized Red by the shoulders.

MacTavish yelled at him.

"Rin fur yer life, Red! Rin, if ye dinna want to be clinkit."

Red turned and broke away from the man holding him.

A gap opened in the crowd.

"This way, mate, this way."

As he hurried off, he glanced over his shoulder and saw the conductor, on his feet once more, talking excitedly to a large policeman and pointing. He hesitated. Why should he go? He'd done no wrong. Why not stay and face things out.

And then he saw MacTavish advance and hit the policeman on the chin.

After that he lost hope and began to run. MacTavish might want to see the inside of a prison; he didn't.

HE RACED down a narrow side street between the railings of Limehouse church and a row of small houses, some with areas and some without. Not knowing in the least whether he was pursued or not, but taking no risks, he dived down a narrow passage between the Five Bells and a church institute, through an opening under a house, and emerged in another street. Still running, he turned to the right and raced under the railway bridge, aware of people standing at the open doors of houses, staring at him as he passed, without trying to stop him, rather in a sense encouraging him by their silence.

He turned to the right into Limehouse Causeway, reached Dunbar Wharf, parallel to the river, turned once more into a narrow alleyway where, breathing deep gasps, he slowed down into a quick walk. Scared that he might be headed back toward Commercial Road East and the police and the crowd, not daring to stop and rest, he came out into another narrow street of small houses, Ropemakers' Fields, and turned to the left, trying to appear as one having business in the neighborhood. At the end of the street he turned to the right, away from the river again.

Dusk had fallen. The street lamps were lighted. He heard no sound of pursuit.

Passers-by glanced at him without interest. Children playing their games paid no heed to him. He was, he felt, tolerably safe at last. But, Lord! how tired. Also, he realized that in falling from the bus he had ricked his ankle and was lame, so lame that it was suddenly difficult to walk.

When he reached Limehouse Cut he halted and leaned against a wall and, stooping, rubbed his ankle.

Had he, he wondered, done what was right in leaving MacTavish. Ought he to have stayed and helped him.

Perhaps he ought. But what good could he have done? None. Would it have helped MacTavish if he had been taken in charge, too? He didn't think so. He could have punched Chadwick's head, of course. Even that would have done no real good.

And then he straightened his back and saw a policeman approaching slowly.

Without hurrying, Red moved away from the wall where he had rested.

V

IN THE kitchen at the back of their small house, Mr. and Mrs. Hartigan quarreled fiercely as only married people can who have neither affection nor respect for each other but only a blind dislike.

The room was warm and stuffy and airless. The window and both doors were shut. The gas was lighted, though turned low. A steak was frying in the frying-pan on the gas ring.

Mr. Hartigan, who made a moderately good living as a riverside thief, sat at the small table which was covered with an oilcloth and laid for supper. Mr. Hartigan's wizened, sallow face was crinkled into a sneer. Whenever he glanced at his wife, his small, dark eyes expressed the contempt he felt for her. From time to time, too, he would raise his right hand and clutch at his cheeks on either side of his thin-lipped mouth and tug at the loose flesh until his fingers and thumb would slide and meet together in front of his yellow, broken teeth.

Mrs. Hartigan, a small, sturdy, dark-haired woman, in whose features there yet remained traces of a faded beauty that twenty years before had won her husband's heart, stood at the stove and divided her time between her cooking and her husband, whom she despised and hated but by no means feared.

All day long he had acted queerly. There was a shiftiness in the way he wriggled out of refusing to answer direct questions that had aroused all her suspicions.

"Sam," she said, pointing her fork at him. "Answer me a strite question—what become of that money?"

"I tell yer, Floss, I ain't got no money."

"Night before last you was out on the river with Bob Hersey. Mrs. Hersey, 'erself, told me this mornin', afore you was sober, her old man 'ad give 'er a quid the night before. If 'e got money to give 'is wife, why ain't you? I want my share. D'you see? Money."

"Listen to me," said Mr. Hartigan heavily, "an' don't talk till I've finished. I told you before, an' now I tell you again, for the last time, I lost it. Every penny I 'ad I lost."

"Ow, come orf it," said Mrs. Hartigan. "Fell through a 'ole in yer pocket, no doubt! Tell us another."

"No, Floss," said Mr. Hartigan. "I lost it playin' cards!"

Mrs. Hartigan turned fiercely, grabbed her husband by the hair, jerked back his head and smacked his face.

"You liar," she said. "Oh, you liar! And last night, where were you, then, eh? Out with Fred. Up the West End. All right, what 'appened? You ain't said a word what you done or got or anything. Ah! But you got something good, I know, the way you been grinnin'. What is it? I'm askin'."

Though a coward at heart, Mr. Hartigan lied bravely.

"I got nothin', Floss, an' that's the solemn truth."

That there was at that moment in the pocket of his jacket which hung on the hook at the back of the door a ruby pendant belonging to Fred was his business and not Floss's. Fred, always careless when he had finished his night's work, had had that one glass of whisky too much, and what had been easier than to take the pendant out of his pocket. If he hadn't taken it, some one else would have, maybe the police. He had done what was right. The worst of it was, if he told Floss, she'd go up in the air and be mad with him and, a million to one, split on him to Fred.

Mr. Hartigan sniffed. A pretty fine state of affairs, when a man's wife would support her brother against her husband! And what a brother!

Mrs. Hartigan, who had been giving her attention to the steak and onions, looked at her husband and said—

"Don't you ever get scared what'll happen after you're dead, Sam?"

"No," said Mr. Hartigan, "I don't."

Mrs. Hartigan laughed ironically.

And then there was the sound of some one moving slowly in the front passage. The street door closed softly. Mr. Hartigan rose to his feet in sudden terror. Was this Fred, then? Mrs. Hartigan, economical even in moments of stress, extinguished the gas under the frying-pan. The kitchen door opened and Red Wilson entered.

His face was smeared with grime and sweat, there was blood on his lip; the brim of his gray hat had lost its shape, crushed underfoot in his scuffle with the bus conductor; his collar was limp and dirty, his clothes were covered with dust, the seam under his right arm gaped open.

He shut the door and turned the key in the lock.

"I've got to stop here a while and rest," he said. "The street door was open. I shut it behind me."

"An' who the —— are you to come walkin' into a man's 'ouse," said Mr. Hartigan.

Something in this young man's face

warned him to go slow. He looked vicious. Hit a feller as soon as speak to him, prob'ly. Tough!

"Who are you?"

"I'm not the police," said Red, "anyhow."

"Didn't think you were," said Mrs. Hartigan. "But right's right. This is our kitchen an' our door you've locked. Makin' pretty free, ain't you, young feller?"

Red felt that in spite of her harshness she was disposed to be friendly.

"I won't be pretty free if that policeman gets me."

"What policeman?" said Mr. Hartigan sharply.

"There was a policeman comin' along, so I slipped in here."

"Then the best thing you can do is to slip out again. We don't want no police 'ere, I can tell you."

"I'm not going," said Red firmly. "I've done nothing wrong, but if the police get me they'll clink me. So I guess I'm not going to run any risks. I'm on my way to a friend of mine, Alf Coley. You don't know him, so that doesn't explain much, but once I reach him I'm safe. I'm in trouble, and all I ask is to be let sit here for a bit and rest."

"If you've done nothin' wrong," said Mrs. Hartigan, "how d'you mean you're in trouble?"

"I had a bit of an argument with a bus conductor and a man I was with made things worse by hitting a policeman. It was the bus conductor started it, all the same."

"Well," said Mr. Hartigan, "we've all got our secrets, ain't we? I 'ave, anyhow."

"You 'ave," said his wife. "More secrets than I've any idea of. But I'm going to get to the bottom o' things tonight, some-'ow." She turned to Red. "Young feller, any copper who saw you now would pinch you at sight. You're a sailor, ain't you! but you look—you look like a dishonest thief!"

"Are you tryin' to be personal?" said Mr. Hartigan, who was once more seated in his chair. He banged on the table with the flat of his hand. "For if you are, I won't 'ave it! You've been naggin' at me all evenin'."

Mrs. Hartigan ignored him.

"Here you," she said to Red, "you need a wash. After that, you've got to go. This isn't a 'ome for sailors in bad with the police an' you needn't think it."

"I won't 'ave it," said Mr. Hartigan. "I will not 'ave it! 'Ints an' goin's-on. Dishonest thief! What d'you mean by it, eh?"

Mrs. Hartigan poured some water out of the kettle into a basin which stood on a small side table by the stove.

"Wash your face an' 'ands, feller, an' get that dirt an' blood off. There's soap in the saucer." She frowned. "What's yer name when you're 'ome, eh?"

"Red! That's what they call me."

HE PUT his jacket on the part of the table not laid for supper and rolled up his shirt sleeves.

"Dishonest thief!" said Mr. Hartigan. "I won't 'ave it, Floss. Do you 'ear?"

"You baboon!" she said. "Not so much of it."

Red lost some of the conversation between husband and wife while he was washing, but as he was drying his face and hands he heard Mr. Hartigan say querulously:

"What I want to know is, Floss, what did yer mean by sayin' you'd get to the bottom o' things tonight? I've got nothin' to 'ide, no more than our friend 'ere."

"You've got a guilty conscience. Think I can't read what you're thinkin'. You've got somethin' belongin' to Fred. You know you 'ave."

"What a —— outrageous lie!" said Mr. Hartigan. "A —— outrageous lie!"

"It's not a lie!" said Mrs. Hartigan. "What 'ave you got in yer coat pocket hangin' there that makes you keep lookin' at it, eh?"

"Nothin'!" said Mr. Hartigan. "I've got nothin', I keep tellin' you. Nothin'! So dry up an' let my coat pocket be."

Mrs. Hartigan made a sudden dash across the small kitchen and snatched his jacket from its hook and dived her right hand into a pocket.

Mr. Hartigan bounded from his chair with an oath and grabbed her and tried to twist her wrist.

"Say," said Red sharply, "cut that out."

He was knotting a blue and white handkerchief about his neck in place of his damp, grimy collar which he had taken off before washing. "You'll hurt her."

"Ow," screamed Mrs. Hartigan. "——! Leggo, you brute!"

She let the jacket drop on to the table.

In her right hand she held a small packet wrapped in tissue paper. She still screamed. Mr. Hartigan released her wrist.

"You blasted fool!" he said. "What d'you want to go makin' all that —— noise for?"

He eyed her moodily as she unwrapped the tissue paper.

"Coo!" she said. "Coo! Look, will you. Look at that, Red! Do you see?"

Red stared, astounded, at a ruby pendant glowing with fire on the palm of her hand and a platinum chain.

Mrs. Hartigan began to laugh wildly.

"My husband! Samuel Hartigan! Honest ain't the word for it. You stole this from Fred. Fred pinched it, an' you picked 'is pocket after he'd 'ad a drop too much to drink. He thought he'd dropped it an' you pretended to 'elp 'im look for it. An' you 'ad it on you all the time. You beauty!"

"How do you know 'e thought he dropped it, eh?"

Mrs. Hartigan put her hands on the table.

"Sam," she said, "Fred's comin' 'ere to-night to see yer."

"He won't be 'ere to-night." said Mr. Hartigan. "He's gone up West again."

"He 'asn't," said Mrs. Hartigan. "He's comin' 'ere. I met him this arternoon. He asked me if you'd be 'ome an' I said you would."

Mr. Hartigan's sallow face had taken on a hue of dirty gray in the gas-light. He also rested his hands on the table. He leaned forward and stared fixedly at his wife, his eyes sunken, so it seemed, back in their sockets, his lower jaw drooping.

"You told 'im," he said. Suddenly he began to move deliberately around the table toward where his wife stood watching him. His arms were bent, his hands were wide open, his short fingers bent like claws. "You told 'im, did you, you slut!"

Before Red could move, before he guessed what would happen, the woman stepped to one side and snatched up a flat iron from a shelf and hit her husband on the head.

He staggered sidewise against the wall.

A smear of blood showed on his head just under the thick, coarse gray hair. Blood trickled slowly down his forehead over his eye, down the side of his nose. He put his hand to his cheek.

"You've hurt me, Floss."

"Sam!" she said, beginning to whimper. "Oh, Sam! Sam, I didn't mean to. Honest, I didn't!" She broke off abruptly. "Listen!"

No one said a word. They waited. In the silence there came the sound of a loud knocking on the front door.

"That's 'im," said Mr. Hartigan, trembling.

"It ain't," said the woman. "That's not Fred's knock. That's the police. What are we goin' to do?"

Some one tramped heavily down the stairs. Red slipped on his jacket and brushed his hat with his elbow.

The front door was opened.

"That's the upstairs people," said Mr. Hartigan, dabbing at his bleeding head.

"Hartigan." A man's voice called. "Hartigan. Come here."

"Perhaps it's you they're after," said the woman. "Out you go, Red. Quick! Through here—look sharp—out over the wall—through one of the other 'ouses."

Red patted her shoulder, nodded to Mr. Hartigan, still bleeding, and passed out through the door into a little dark kitchen, out through another door into a small back yard. He paused for a moment and listened before closing the door softly after him. And then, he climbed the brick wall and dropped into the back yard of one of a row of small houses that faced the opposite way from the house he had just left.

VI

THE back door of the house was ajar. Red entered a dark little scullery and stood, listening. He could hear the noise of a sewing machine and the low murmur of voices and some one laughing.

A door opened, giving him a glimpse, no more, of a gas-lit kitchen like the Hartigans' and the slim figure of a girl. The door closed and the girl came to him and put her arms around his neck and breathed in his ear:

"Gus, darling, you gotta go. See! Pa's mad. Don't stay no longer. Trouble!"

She hugged him and kissed him. And then she thrust him away from her roughly, saying huskily:

"Who are you?"

Before Red could speak the door opened once more and a small, thin, stooping man stood on the threshold of the kitchen.

"Bethie!" he said. "What you do? Bethie, who ith that man? Tell me!"

"How should I know!" said the girl with a toss of her head.

By the light of the kitchen Red saw that the girl was slender and dark and graceful. She began to laugh.

"It's so silly!" she explained.

"I send for the police," said the man.

The whirring noise of the sewing machine ceased and a woman's voice, speaking with the same funny foreign accent as the man's, said:

"Abie, you will do no such a thing. Would you have the neighbors scandal make about our daughter?"

"I will thend for the police," said the man. And all at once he appeared to take leave of his senses. "I will be master in mine own houthe. You interrupt mine work, mine writing, you. Who are you?"

"I lost my way," said Red.

The girl giggled.

"In our back yard?"

And then from the Hartigans' house there came the crash of breaking glass, and Mrs. Hartigan screamed:

"Fred, Sam, don't for —— sake!"

"Abie," said the woman in the kitchen, "will you that door shut. Am I mine death of cold to catch."

The man shook his finger in Red's face.

"I have guess the thecret. You are one of that crooked gang that lives in that houthe."

"Tell me," said the girl, "what made you come here?"

"The police were after me," said Red. "I got into a fight, that's all. I came through that house and over the wall."

"It ith impothible!" said the man. "I work for the emanthipation of mankind an' men like you, crooked gangs, they come an' thee my daughter. I will not have it, once for all. How can I mine work do, mine writing, when there ith thith interruption!"

"A pity you can not earn some money like other men!" said the woman's voice from the kitchen.

"Money!" said the man. "Mine ——!" He hurried into the kitchen. "What for you talk like that to me for? Anna, do you not see that money is the curthe, that you play into the handth of the capitalists by working for them? It ith impothible."

"Abie, do you eat the same as me an' Bessie or don't you?"

The girl dragged Red toward the kitchen.

"As likely as not Pa'll send for a copper. Better go."

A dark, sallow-faced woman, large in the bust and shoulders, sat at the table under the gas with a sewing machine and some golden, shimmering silk stuff before her.

"That's Ma," said the girl with a laugh. "The breadwinner. All Pa does is to write for his paper nobody buys, how bad the world is an' why the workers—Ma an' me—should rise in their might an' crush the aristocrat who lives on their toil, which is Pa, himself."

The little man's face showed an unsuspected depth of agony. He glared at his daughter, his mouth working under his thin mustache, his chin with its little thin beard moving from side to side. In the gas-light his eyes were glazed and faded. He raised his arms toward the low ceiling.

"——!" he said. "I work for the oppressed. An' mine women folk mock at me. Momma, tell me, what for do I live? I work, I work." He clapped his hands on to the crown of his small, bald head. "I have the headache. Bethie, show that young loafer out of the front door."

"Thank you," said Red, "I'm much obliged."

He was about to say that he, too, held the same views about the aristocrat who lived on the toil of the workers and agreed with every word that the little worried-looking man had said, but the expression in the woman's face, a kind of tired resignation and patience with the stupidity of one much loved, made him change his mind. Perhaps her side of the question would be less encouraging.

He followed the girl out of the room into a little, narrow, dark passage. She giggled and squeezed his arm.

"Gus was there in the back kitchen all the time an' no one saw him but me. He's there now." And then, to Red's amazement, she once again flung her arm around his neck and drew him to her and kissed him. "That's for yourself for being a sport. Good-by. I wish—yes, I wish, somehow, Gus was like you. An' now you must go."

She opened the door and Red was once again in the open air.

IT WAS night at last and still warm. Overhead the stars shone in a sky of pale, tranquil blue. On either side of the little, narrow street, lights showed in the windows. People sat at the open doors and talked. Red,

glancing from left to right, knew he was lost. He did not like to ask where he was. He knew only that if he made his way Westward, sooner or later, he would reach Well Close Square and Alf Coley.

He turned to the right and walked quickly toward the red afterglow visible above the house-tops and presently found himself once more by the river.

He halted on the swing bridge of the Regent's Canal Dock and gazed at the lights of the shipping. Opposite where he stood were Surrey Commercial Docks. He had been there, Lavender Pond, the year before, with a cargo of timber. How much had happened since then, he reflected. And then he smiled. Come to think of it, how much had happened since that afternoon.

He walked slowly on, thinking of MacTavish—the mad Scotsman—Chadwick, and the crowd that gathered to hear him talk, the boatswain with his large head and wide shoulders, Chips, George—the barman—who had fought him, the plump landlady, Joe Deacon, with his ambition to take the trip around the world in a liner, and his cheap trickery, the bus conductor, the stout policeman that MacTavish had hit, Sam Hartigan, Mrs. Hartigan, Fred, whom he had never met but whom Mr. and Mrs. Hartigan had considered a threat to their peace of mind, Bessie, the black-haired, pretty girl with her kisses and her Gus, hidden all the time in the back kitchen, Anna, who sat at the sewing machine and worked so that Abie, her husband, the poor little Jew writer, might write and reform the world.

What a crew, thought Red. Tragic and comic.

He wondered what Alf Coley would make of them.

Some one was calling his name in the distance. Not MacTavish surely.

"Red! Where are you?"

On his guard at once Red turned quickly to the right up a street that led away from the riverside. He waited, hidden from view, in a dark entry.

"Red! what's come to you?"

There was agitation in the man's throat.

Some one else said:

"What's up, chum? Anything the matter?"

"Red!" called the man. "Red!"

Red saw by the light of a street-lamp Hartigan, bareheaded, the smear of blood still on his forehead, reach the corner and hesitate.

"Red!" he shouted. "Oh, Red, where are yer?"

A heavy wagon, drawn by two big horses, passed down the cobbled incline. When the wagon had gone, Mr. Hartigan had vanished, apparently along Narrow Street, the street out of which Red had just turned, in the direction of Ratcliff and Shadwell.

Red moved from the doorway where he had stood and began to limp up the slope of the cobbled street away from the Thames. He was tired to the point of exhaustion, and rather dazed. Comic, of course. Nothing else. And his ankle was aching. He wondered what had happened after he had climbed the wall. He wondered why Hartigan, bareheaded, should be running through the streets of Stepney, shouting his name.

At the top of the street he turned to the left, there being no other way to turn, and then farther on, to the right.

On his left was the Limehouse, Ratcliff, Shadwell and Wapping Coroner's Court, on his right Bergen Wharf, ahead of him were the two arches of a railway station spanning the road, beyond were the lights and traffic of Commercial Road East.

He said to a man approaching him—

"Say, is that a railway station yonder?"

"Stepney," said the man.

Red thanked him and walked on. He would finish the rest of the journey by rail. He was too lame and too tired to walk. He entered the booking office and bought a third-class ticket to Leman Street which was, he knew, near Well Close Square where he would find Alf Coley, the man who would help him. The price of his ticket was a penny halfpenny.

"Train just due in," said a ticket collector. "Up the stairs there. Look sharp."

Red reached the platform just as the train from Blackwall arrived. He scrambled into a compartment and dropped breathlessly into a seat. A porter slammed the door after him. The train began to move.

"Red!" some one called.

He sprang to his feet and looked out of the window. Hartigan hurried toward him.

"Red, for ——'s sake, where you goin'?"

"Stand back!" shouted the porter.

"Leman Street!" Red answered. "What's the matter?"

Hartigan was struggling with the porter, trying to reach the train, now rapidly

moving out of the station. He yelled at the top of his voice:

"Wait for me, Red. Comin' on by next train!"

Red sank back once more on to the cushioned seat and pulled out his pipe and struck a match. The only other passenger in the compartment was an elderly gentleman, with a thin, tight face and invisible eyelids and a long nose and gold-rimmed glasses. He read a paper and, as Red began to smoke, glanced at him and frowned.

"This is not a smoking compartment!" he said severely.

Red looked at him in silent resentment. Here, he thought, was a man who had made money out of the poor. A man who imagined himself better than other men.

"I'd be obliged if you'd put out your pipe."

His tone was cold and superior and definitely hostile, it seemed, to one so far beneath him in rank.

"Suppose I don't put it out!" said Red.

"We have our remedies!" said the old gentleman.

"Yes," said Red. "Up to now you've had 'em, but you listen to me and I'll tell you a secret. You've had your day, you rich folk. Soon we'll have ours—me an' my mates, workers, sailors, firemen, railway men, and such like. Do you understand, mister? Your money won't help you then. You're finished and I'm just beginning. You chew on that a while."

Red wondered what Alf Coley would say, with what pride would he regard him, could he have heard him bearding this plutocrat face to face, telling him what he thought of him. And then he remembered Hartigan who was going to follow on the next train to Leman Street. What was the reason for Hartigan's frantic anxiety to speak to him?

The train drew up at Shadwell station.

The old gentleman put his head out of the window.

"Guard!" he called. "One moment please."

No, thought Red, Hartigan wasn't to be trusted. Better avoid him and have done with him.

"Yes, sir," said the guard. He opened the door.

"There's a man here who will persist in smoking his pipe, though it's not a smoking compartment and I've asked him not to!"

Red laughed and stood up.

"I'm getting out here. Good-by, mister! Don't get too angry or you'll have a stroke or break a blood vessel or something."

He stepped out onto the platform.

"Half a minute," said the guard. "Let's see your ticket."

"Take it then," said Red. "Needn't think I'm traveling without a ticket, I'm not."

"No," said the guard. "But you're traveling first-class on a third-class ticket. You'll pay excess. Penny ha'penny!"

"But I'm getting out, darn it! This is Shadwell!"

"All right. Excess fare, Stepney to Shadwell—the same as from Stepney to Fenchurch Street."

"It's a hold-up," said Red. "How did I know it was a first-class carriage?"

"They all say that," said the guard. "You've got to pay excess, anyway."

Outside the station Red bought an evening paper and stood for a while, glancing at the news of the day.

HEADLINES at the foot of the page, tucked away in the right-hand corner, attracted his attention. He read with growing interest and excitement how Lady Crestworth, the wife of Sir Thomas Crestworth, had found on her arrival home from the theater and supper at a restaurant afterward, that a ruby pendant she had worn suspended from a platinum chain around her neck was missing. She could not account for her loss but thought possibly the clasp might have broken and the jewel have fallen in the theater or leaving the theater. She did not believe any thief could have been clever enough to have stolen it without attracting her attention. She was always so careful in crowds. However, to be on the safe side, the matter had been reported to Scotland Yard.

Red laughed. This, he was sure, was the ruby pendant he had last seen in Mrs. Hartigan's hand; the pendant her husband had stolen from Fred, her brother, who had in turn stolen it from some poor, soft-headed idiot of a woman who didn't believe any thief would have been clever enough to steal it without attracting her attention.

Red sauntered down Sutton Street until he reached Cable Street, where he turned west again.

And now he was on the last lap of his

journey. At the other end of Cable Street he would find Well Close Square and Alf Coley. His troubles would be finished. He had seen enough of humanity in the raw to last him for months. He wanted now the companionship of a man who would help him and teach him how best he could be of use in pushing the cause to its inevitable, ultimate victory.

Once again he reflected how strange it was that a man like Alf Coley could be the friend of Joe Deacon, a crook as bad as Sam Hartigan; worse, even, for while Hartigan preyed on the rich, Deacon robbed only the poor.

He made his way slowly, limping a little, along the crowded, narrow sidewalk of Cable Street, past the little shops, like the shops of West Ferry Road and West India Dock Road, but with less of the waterfront atmosphere—pawnbrokers, outfitters, Jew tailors, warehouses, general dealers, slop shops, shoemakers, grocers, butchers, barbers, and the inevitable gloomy, dreary-looking pubs, crowded with men and women, drinking and talking and laughing and escaping in the one way possible from the drabness and poverty of Shadwell.

There were rows of little houses, too, of the same old brown brick he hated, houses with a ground floor and one upper story, inhabited, apparently, only by small and noisy children and tired women. And on the right-hand side of Cable Street, with its cobbles echoing to the slow pounding of cart-horses' hoofs and the slow moving motor lorries, were smaller streets, leading north toward Commercial Road East, streets spanned by railway arches—Dean Street, Watney Street, with barrows lighted by naphtha lights flaring in the breeze and loud-mouthed salesmen and costermongers and swarms of purchasers, haggling over bargains. Opposite on the left-hand side of Cable Street, Red watched for a moment a crowd outside the Weslyan chapel and wondered what service they would be holding at this hour, and then he saw two policemen leading a drunken man away, his feet dragging on the flagstones. He passed the Town Hall, and on the other side of the street was Anthony Street, leading north again.

Near a row of small houses, standing a little way back from the sidewalk, with little front gardens protected by railings and bare of all vegetation save a few stunted trees, he met two small children, a boy and a girl of about six and eight.

Both wept bitterly.

"Hello!" said Red. "What's the matter now?" He groped in his trousers pockets. Here's sixpence," he said. "Trot along."

They took the money and laughed. Red strolled on. He heard wails and looked back. A stout, slatternly woman was shaking the little boy. She snatched something from his hand and hurried away.

"Did she take the sixpence?" Red asked.

They nodded, tears streaming down their faces. Red swore softly. Once more he felt in his trousers pockets. He found some shillings and a penny. A shilling was more than he cared to give; a penny was not enough. He felt in his waistcoat pockets and found another penny and two half-pennies. And then he thrust his hands into the side pockets of his jacket and the fingers of his right hand closed on something hard and round and smooth with a thin chain attached. His heart began to thump furiously. His throat contracted. He felt almost physically sick. In his hand he held the ruby pendant.

He gave the little girl a shilling.

"Here," he said, "don't you be a silly couple of kids and let her or any one else take it from you."

"She'll see it," said the little boy.

"How can she see it? Keep out of her way."

"We can't," said the little girl. "That's our mother."

"She's gone for her beer," said the little boy.

"Poor kids!" said Red. "You'd better spend it, then, quick."

HE TRIED to recall as he walked on once more what had happened when he and the Hartigans had heard the knock at the front door and the footsteps of the man from upstairs. Mrs. Hartigan had had the pendant in one hand, the flatiron in the other. She had stood, white-faced and trembling, by the table on which was the coat, both coats, his own and her husband's.

Had she, he wondered, put the pendant into his pocket on purpose? Or had it slipped from her hand in the excitement of the moment? Or had she thought it was her husband's jacket that she had in front of her and not his?

But whatever her motive or reasons, accident or no accident, he had the pendant, which belonged by rights neither to him nor Sam Hartigan nor to Sam Hartigan's brother-in-law, Fred, but to some —— fool of a woman who didn't believe any thief would have been clever enough to steal it without attracting her attention. He'd have to send it back to her, somehow, whether she deserved it or not.

And suppose some policeman got hold of him meanwhile.

What then?

Could he prove, even, that he hadn't taken the pendant? Where had he been at the time of the theft? Had he an alibi? His own word and no one else's. He'd been by himself all evening; his last evening, he had imagined, ashore before the trip on the *Cape Spartel*. He'd had his supper early, then gone to the movies, then had a couple of drinks in two different pubs, then walked slowly along Commercial Road East, smoking his pipe, watching the people, dawdling. It was past midnight before he'd reached the place where he was lodging. Where was the alibi he must have to prove his innocence?

And suppose he wasn't able to trace the Hartigans. Suppose they moved in a hurry, knowing the pendant had been slipped into his pocket. He felt that the wisest course was to take the pendant to Alf Coley, now quite near at hand, and ask his advice. Coley would know what he should do.

He turned up a narrow side street toward the railway. And then, sheltered by a dark archway where no one was likely to see him, he slipped the platinum chain over his head and pushed the ruby down out of sight under his shirt and the knotted handkerchief.

VII

MRS. COLEY stood at the corner of Harad's Place, a narrow flagged passage leading diagonally from Well Close Square to Well Street.

She was a well set up, prosperous-seeming, woman of about thirty, inclined to plumpness, with a broad face, brown cow-like eyes, brown hair, a skin that was pallid from having to pass too much of her life indoors, with a touch of cheap rouge on her round cheeks and lips. She wore a blue suit with a skirt rather too short for her and a pale blue hat with a turned-up brim and a pink feather; her stockings were of pink artificial silk, her black patent-leather shoes seemed much too small for her feet and the heels were so high that she had the appearance of being at any instant likely to topple forward on to her face.

She was dressed in her best and felt pleased with herself and her looks. Though tired after a long day's work in the factory, she was contented—even, indeed, happy—and prepared to take what life offered in the way of an evening's amusement.

The trouble was, she debated, where could she find amusement near Well Close Square? She wished that husband of hers—he was her husband, worse luck; legally, lawfully, her wedded husband, and more fool she—she wished he was still in clink. Except when he was actually at sea, firing in some steamer's stoke-hold, which was —— seldom, she'd known no peace of mind for years until she'd had word that they'd run him in. What worried her most was, why when they had Alf, they hadn't kept him.

And, funny, the only time in his life Alf had ever behaved half-way decent was when they'd put him away for twelve months' hard, and then he was so —— good—he would be, the rat!—they'd actually let him off months sooner that she'd expected.

And now, where was he?

Loafing around somewhere, drinking, of course, and nothing was more probable than he'd spend every farthing he had and come begging for money. She'd let him have it, too. She couldn't help it. More fool she. That explained it. A fool! Must be. Else she'd never have married him.

Thus did Mrs. Coley muse, leaning against one of the little cannon that, turned upside down, served as posts at the entrance to Harad's Place.

A young man approached from the direction of Cable Street. He was a shabby-looking young man in a disheveled blue suit, wearing a gray hat pulled down over his eyes, and a blue-and-white handkerchief knotted, sailor fashion, about his neck; a young man with a brown face and a limp and eyes that when you saw them made you think, somehow, that like so many other young men, he didn't want no truck with the police.

Mrs. Coley watched him without interest. No man, in her opinion, was worth noticing if he so far forgot himself as to appear in public without a collar.

Red halted and spoke to a man who leaned against the wall of a house, smoking.

"Say, d'you happen to know any one around here by the name of Coley?"

The man eyed him steadily, then removing his pipe from his mouth pointed with the stem in the direction of the plump woman in the blue suit. Red had already noticed her and was not impressed.

"If you want to know where Coley is, better ask Mrs. Coley. That's her, yonder."

"Thank you," said Red.

Mrs. Coley glanced at him as he drew near.

"Beg you pardon, are you Mrs. Coley?"

She was surprized.

"Well, yes. What do you want?"

She drew herself up and became very dignified. You couldn't be too careful, having red-headed strangers talking to you this way. People were watching her, she knew—enemies of hers—cats!

"Could you tell me where Mr. Coley is?"

"What do you want with him?"

"Nothing much. A friend of his, one of the best friends he's got, told me to go and see him. He said Alf, your husband, would be glad to meet me."

Alf's best friend. Mrs. Coley was more and more interested.

She liked the look of this young man, collar or no collar. What was more, he was too nice a boy to be mixed up with a hard-boiled old twister like Alf.

"Well, listen, Alf ain't 'ome. He's gorn off for the evenin', to prayer meetin', most like." She broke into a chuckle. "That's it, prayer meetin', probably, an' won't be home lord knows what time."

"And you don't know where I can find him?" said Red.

"No, I don't," said Mrs. Coley.

"Well," said Red, "I guess I've had my journey for nothing."

"You've met me, 'aven't you?" said Mrs. Coley archly. "Listen here, kid, what's the matter with you an' me goin' off to the pictures together? I know where there's a swell film." She hesitated. "If it's a question o' cash, you leave that to me."

"I don't know if I can, ma'm," he said doubtfully.

"Come on! No need to be shy."

A broad-shouldered, heavily built man came slouching down the narrow passage that led from Well Close Square between the rows of small houses with their windows open to the summer evening and men and women standing, talking, in the doorways. A lamp that stood in the center of the passage cast its reflection on him as he approached and showed a heavy, truculent-looking face, clean-shaven and hard and sullen, fierce eyebrows, a hooked nose, protruding under lip and cleft chin. He wore a suit of shabby clothes with a handkerchief about his neck and a peaked cap.

Some one called to him from a doorway. He nodded but did not speak.

"I don't think I care to go to the pictures, ma'm," said Red. "Not to-night. I'm disappointed at not meetin' Alf Coley. When my friend, Joe Deacon, told me about him—"

The change in the woman's expression astounded him. She stared at him with a kind of blank, blind terror in her eyes, her mouth open, the spots of color vivid against the pallor of her cheeks. She gasped:

"What's that! Joe Deacon! And you got the nerve, —— you. You got the nerve—"

She turned swiftly. The truculent, hard looking man was near her.

She uttered a wild scream.

"Alf, Alf!"

"Well, what is it? Shut yer blasted noise, can't you."

"Alf, this feller here's been sayin' things he oughtn't to say to any decent woman. Alf—"

"Have you gone off your head?" said Red. "What are you talking about?"

The woman, this Mrs. Coley, was clutching the man's arm, pointing toward him, talking at the top of her voice, telling lies.

"Out o' my light, can't you," said the man.

"Alf, he's been sayin' things 'e oughtn't to say."

Red shuddered. The woman kept calling the man Alf. Why Alf?

"I'm looking for a feller called Coley," he said. "Alf Coley. Joe Deacon sent me."

"There!" screamed the woman. "Didn't I tell you. That swine's been talkin'. I warned yer, Alf. I said it—I said it."

The man's face was twisted into an expression of such ferocious anger that Red drew back, aghast.

He snarled at the woman:

"You slut! You an' your —— warnin's."

He thrust her aside with a swing of his right arm. She staggered against the side

wall of a small shop, her hands raised, palms outward, as if to ward off a blow. Then, ducking her head, she turned and bolted down Well Street toward the high, dark wall of the London Dock where St. George Street becomes Upper East Smithfield.

"What in thunder's wrong?" said Red.

"I'll show you what's wrong." said the man.

HE advanced until his face was within six inches of Red's. His eyes were small and dark, with heavy lids of wrinkled skin, pinkish, and set close together near his nose. One side of his upper lip was lifted and showed a gap in his teeth. There was a wetness on the side of his chin as if he had been dribbling tobacco juice. Though clean-shaven, he needed a shave.

All this Red noticed in a glance as the man scowled at him.

"I'll show you what's wrong," he repeated. "I'm Alf Coley. Get that—Alf Coley." And then he thew back his head and shouted with laughter. "Alf Coley."

Red could say nothing. Alf Coley. This! He had an almost overpowering impression of something evil as he gazed into the man's eyes.

"An' you're Joe Deacon's friend, are yer? He sent you, eh?"

One of the spectators said in a low voice—"Hook it, feller."

Red turned his head toward the man who had spoken. And then he was aware of Alf Coley's fist, seen out of the corner of his eyes. Before he could move, there was a crash, a blinding flash of light, a stabbing pain between his eyes. He dropped forward on hands and knees. When he stood up, shakily, blinded, there was another crash, a jarring of his neck and spinal column, his head was jerked backward. And then there came an impact, a cataclysm, just under the arch of his ribs—something hard hit the back of his head, and he knew presently that he lay on the flagstones, staring blankly up at the stars in the soft, pale blue sky, fighting to draw his breath.

He was tough and hard and in tolerable training, or Coley's blow, so he felt, his blow on the mark, the solar plexus, would have killed him. A devastating blow. He remembered, lying on the sidewalk of Well Street, unable to move but conscious of a crowd of sympathizers standing around him, he remembered faintly having read of how one Fitzsimmons had put out one Jim Corbett in just that very way. And then Coley's voice penetrated his coma.

"Tell Joe Deacon if he dares show himself within reach, I'll do the same to him I done to you."

Red, struggling to sit up, was hurled sidewise by a kick from a heavily-shod foot and wondered whether he was going to be sick or not.

"One of these days you'll meet some feller stronger than you are, Coley, an' you'll get what for." It was a woman who was speaking, Red realized; an elderly woman with a thin and crackly voice. "I'm goin' to fetch a policeman."

"Try it an' see what happens," said Coley.

Some one helped Red to his feet.

"Don't send for a policeman." he said. "No use."

He saw Coley walking slowly away, up the slope in the direction of Cable Street, with a slightly swaggering gait, his hands in his pockets, and knowing, it seemed, that no one watching him at the corner of Harad's Place would dare follow him.

"He's like that," said a woman.

"Ah!" said a man. "Young feller, you've been up against one of the toughest blokes you'll find around this part. A bad egg. Alf Coley his name is. No good. Ship's fireman, as hard as they make 'em. Just out o' prison in the North o' England for assaultin' the second engineer of a steamer he'd served in, after he was paid off. He waited for him and just about half killed him, they said. You steer clear of Alf. But if you want him run in, you can count on me for a witness. I seen it all an' I owe him for something he done three years ago."

"You keep out o' this," said his wife. "Do you 'ear me?"

"Lord!" said Red. "I'm not going to the police. No —— fear. That's no way o' settling things. That man—well, he got me when I wasn't looking."

"Ah! Same as Carpentier, the Frenchman, got Kid Lewis. When he wasn't lookin', eh?"

Red was thinking. Coley had half killed him, just as the man had said he had half killed the second engineer of his ship. A mean advantage to take on a man, hitting him like that. No good. Even now he felt sick and dizzy.

And then there came into his mind a determination to get even with Coley, somehow, if it took him a month. He'd follow him, track him down, and as soon as he felt more able to hold his own than he did now he'd fight the swine.

"I'm going after him," he said simply.

One of his eyes was half shut, his chin was sore, his features felt swollen and tender. His ribs ached intolerably.

"Which way did he go?" he asked.

"Up Well Street and then, God knows!" said some one.

"Don't you be a fool, son," said the wife of the man who had offered to give evidence. "He'll eat you."

"I've boxed," said Red. "Often."

"Ah! but can you fight? Alf's a fighter."

"I can take care of myself," said Red.

With a nod to the men and women who tried to dissuade him from his purpose he set off up Well Street after Coley.

A man called to him:

"Don't let him uppercut you, then. Keep your distance an' you'll be all right. 'E's slow, but 'e can hit."

At the corner of Well Street and Cable Street, with Leman Street station and the railway bridge across the road in front of him, Red saw Coley hesitate, then turn to the left and cross the street and walk quickly Westward along Royal Mint Street.

VIII

IN A general way Red Wilson had always considered himself ill used, but no more so than any one else among his acquaintances. The upper classes had kept him down. They were rich, therefore he was poor. They had opportunity, he had not. And so, naturally enough from his own point of view, he had become a Red and gloried in a doctrine of violent economic change that would give him the things for which he had craved all his life.

As representing conditions that denied him what other men had—as a right—he hated all skippers, mates, boatswains, and more remotely ship-owners, any one indeed cleverer than himself or luckier or better mannered or with a better education. Life offered him no escape from—he could put it in no other way—from himself. He drifted aimlessly from ship to ship, from forecastle to forecastle, from one boarding house to another, almost from pub to pub, without hope. He had, he felt, few qualifications for success, except possibly good health, strength, a temper not too easily lost. He could take care of himself in a scrap better than most men. Women made no appeal to him. They were nuisances, to be tolerated, perhaps, nothing more. Whisky he avoided, not on principle, but because alcohol, unlike candy, awoke no response in him. He drank because other men drank, without interest or enjoyment.

But until Alf Coley hit him without cause Red had had no actual, definite purpose in his rebellion against life. His hate was diffused widely against many objects. Economic Conditions, the Privileges of the Possessing Classes, the Monopoly of Wealth, Aristocracy, Capitalism were all vague terms that represented a power against which it was impossible to fight, single-handed. But now, suddenly, everything was changed. He had an ambition at last; a passionate desire to bring about a desired result, a longing for justice. He wanted to meet Alf Coley somewhere where there would be no interference either from friends or police, and thrash him. If he won, he would be the happiest man alive; if he lost, he would, at least, mark Coley with his fists first.

Looking back on all that had taken place since he had left the *Cape Spartel* at Millwall Dock, he felt that of all the tough, unpleasant men and women he had met Coley alone had no redeeming feature. He was worse, even, than Joe Deacon who had deliberately, knowing what kind of brute Coley was, begged him to go and find him, if he wanted a friend.

And so, still dazed by the unreasoning fury of Alf Coley's attack, still weak on his legs, Red Wilson followed the man who had, more than any other man, helped to destroy his faith in human nature.

They walked along the left hand side of Royal Mint Street, with some fifteen or twenty yards distance between them, under the railway bridge, past a succession of small shops, like the shops in Cable Street, and dark buildings, warehouses and storeyards with big wooden doors, while opposite, across the cobbled street, behind a wooden hoarding topped with barbed wire, was the L. M. S. goods station.

And then once more Coley hesitated and seemed in doubt what he should do next.

Red held back, afraid that even now he

might turn and see him and, in spite of the darkness and the distance between them, discover him and so make it impossible for him to bring about what he had at heart. But without looking round, Coley moved on again across St. Katherine's Way, running north from the river and Tower Bridge, and turned to the right up Minories between big, dark blocks of office buildings, closed for the night.

At Aldgate, with its crowded pavements and noise and traffic and lights, Red felt safe for the first time since he had left Well Close Square. Here there was little chance of Coley's seeing him.

A 26B bus passed, not yet moving at its full speed, and Coley swung himself on to the rear platform.

Red, knowing that he must make the effort or lose him, managed to clamber after him.

Risking detection, knowing he must learn where Coley was going, he followed him up the steps that led to the roof and dropped into the seat just in front of him where he sat with his shoulders humped and his hat pulled down over his face.

"Fares, please," said the conductor.

"Bank," said Coley.

"Penny," said the conductor. His bell rang as he punched the ticket.

"Bank," said Red, and paid his penny. And what, he wondered, would Coley do when he reached the Bank. His movements had suddenly become mysterious.

The bus rattled and rumbled along Leadenhall Street, clear of all traffic now save other buses, between rows of dark and deserted offices, with only an occasional lighted window high up to show where some one was still at work, with arc lamps shining on the empty sidewalks and policemen standing at the corners, past Billiter Street and Saint Mary Axe and Lime Street, across Gracechurch Street and Bishopsgate and on into Cornhill, a run of only a few short minutes.

At the Royal Exchange Coley, smoking his pipe, rose and descended the steps. Before the bus had quite stopped he dropped off and crossed the street toward the tube station.

Red, afraid that he might lose him underground, followed quickly, across the street, and down the steps, around the Central Booking Hall, past an illuminated notice board—white letters on a black ground, "To Waterloo Station," with an arrow pointing the way—down a long, steep slope, with every few yards steps and a stretch of hand-rail, and circular walls of glazed, white tiles covered with advertisements; to where the slope became a flight of steps which ended in the station and another illuminated notice board, which gave the price of the fare, twopence, and stated that fares were collected and tickets issued on the train, with another arrow pointing to the right, where a funny little train of one coach only waited at the platform.

Without looking round, Alf Coley passed into the smoking compartment at the rear of the train.

Red entered the front compartment and sat on the right hand side next the dividing door between the two sections.

The driver, laughing at something the conductor had said to him, went up the short flight of steps that led to the fore part of the compartment and let himself into his cab through a door on the left hand side of the car.

The train began to move out of the station, the conductor stepped through the doorway, slid the door shut after him and took the fares of the three passengers; Red, an elderly woman and an old man who was either half drunk or half asleep.

In the dividing door between the two compartments were two narrow windows of ground glass bordered by a narrow strip of plain glass through which Red kept peering cautiously—hate in his heart—at Coley, who sat some distance away, facing him, his arms folded, smoking his pipe. Red felt a sudden urge to enter the smoking compartment, then and there, and fight him while he had the chance. He dismissed the idea as too dangerous. He must wait.

When in a few minutes' time the train glided into Waterloo and the conductor opened the sliding door, Red did not stir until he had seen Coley leave the car. He followed him through the high, gloomy station, badly lighted, with an arched roof and walls of whitewashed brick, up the flight of stairs that led to the moving staircase, certain by now that even if Coley did turn and see him riding some half dozen or so steps behind him he would not know him.

But a sudden fear gripped him as he stepped off the moving staircase into the Southern Railway terminus that perhaps

Coley would book a ticket and make his way on to one of the main line platforms to board a train for the West of England; Plymouth, perhaps, or Exeter; or Southampton, or Portsmouth. Coley had halted and stood looking about him. Suppose he intended to leave London that night. He would have had his long, tiring chase from Well Close Square for nothing. The earlier part of his journey, from West Ferry Road, Isle of Dogs, to Well Close Square, by way of Limehouse and Shadwell and Cable Street, Red now regarded as a mere incident in a crowded day, immaterial as having nothing to do with Alf Coley, the real Coley, and not the Coley of his imagination.

AND then, much to his relief, Coley walked slowly out of the station, down the broad steps and on to the sloping footpath where he met a man, dressed in a chauffeur's peaked cap and a shabby blue suit, a broad-shouldered man built very much the same pattern as Coley himself.

"Hullo, Moss," Red heard Coley say. "'Ow are you?"

"You're late."

"I'm not. Let's 'ave a drink. I've got to talk."

They turned and walked side by side down the sloping driveway that led to York Road.

Red waited until they were a safe distance ahead of him. Then he followed once more, very cautiously, his hands in his pockets, slouching along as if he had no real aim or object in being alive, but worrying because Coley had found a friend thus making his task twice as difficult as before and twice as dangerous.

When the two men reached York Road they turned to the right up Mepham Street between the railway viaduct and the sloping brick wall of their driveway that led down from the station.

Red kept them in sight.

They walked past an archway with a short length of street visible beyond, Boyce Street, with gas-lamps projecting from the fronts of the small houses on either side and beyond that the Waterloo Road, and then a second archway, with another short length of street, Agnes Street, and entered The Hole in the Wall, a small glass-fronted public house built under another arch.

Red saw them through the open door. They stood at the bar, still talking. Again he was doubtful what he should do. Suppose when they had had their drinks they left the place by some other door that would take them out into some other street the farther side of the railway. From where he was he could not see whether there was such a door or not.

A policeman came slowly along Mepham Street.

Red decided suddenly there was greater risk in staying outside the public house, watching the two men inside, than in entering boldly and ordering a drink and trusting in Coley's not remembering him. If Coley left by that other door, if there were such a door, he would be ready to go after him.

The two men, Coley and Moss, had left the bar and now stood whispering together between the door and a small wooden table. With his hat pulled well down over his eyes Red ascended the four steps that led from the street and passed behind Coley's back toward the bar, where he ordered a glass of stout. He put down his money, took a leisurely drink and then, passing this time between the man called Moss and the table, seated himself at the table on the bench next the brick arch.

Neither Coley nor Moss had interrupted their talk or paid any attention to him. And as he sat with his arms folded on the table in front of him, his head bent, nodding as if he were half asleep or half drunk, like the old man in the train, he listened to what they said.

Coley's deep voice, even in a whisper, reached him clearly.

"One thing I don't understand yet, Moss, 'ow are you goin' to get 'old of him?"

Moss glanced uneasily toward the bar.

"Not so loud, for ——'s sake!" he mumbled.

"Come an' sit down," said Coley.

Red did not move. He breathed deeply and regularly, so that any one watching him might think him asleep.

Coley and Moss seated themselves on the bench opposite.

Moss whispered:

"I've got an old woman to take a note across to the theater in the second interval. After that, it's up to you."

" 'ow did you find out about the theater?" said Coley.

"Easy. The feller who got my job—blast 'im—after old Farlow sacked me, told 'em at the garage. I drop in for a talk now an' again. Old Farlow's a rum kind of 'ound. He's got two hobbies; one's money, the other's the theater. Not the kind o' thing you'd think a bloke like that would care for, but Shakespeare an' so on. I remember once when I was driving him he told me there was one theater only in the world where you can see this Shakespeare stuff acted right, and that was this here place they call the Old Vic. That's where he's at tonight. Got a box. He'll miss his dinner, because the show starts early, like, and eat sandwiches an' buns an' drink coffee or tea at the theater, an' him a millionaire about twice over an' ought to have more sense. Soft, I call 'im. The Rolls brought him there, seven thirty—the Rolls will fetch 'im again, half past ten, about. Get that. The woman, she takes the boy's letter across to the old man. He's sorry he run away, he says, he wants to go 'ome, he's sick. He is, too. I'm about scared to look at him. Once old Farlow gets into the 'ouse—"

"All right," said Coley. "All right." He sucked in his breath with a juicy, wet sound.

"Once old Farlow gets into the 'ouse, Moss, I'll 'ave him where he can't get free, no matter 'ow 'ard he twists an' wriggles! I'll put 'im through it, sure as my name's Alf Coley."

Coley's voice was still a whisper, even more than before, but Red, his head now resting on his folded arms, heard every word he said distinctly.

"The —— old crook. Got me twelve months 'ard, he did. Newcastle! He's one o' them blasted capitalists, old Farlow is, what's made money by grindin' the faces o' workin' men like me in the dirt. I know. Twelve months he got me because I stood up for me rights aboard ship, I did, an' took it out of the —— second engineer who'd had it in for me all the —— voyage. Yes, Moss, that's 'ow it was. The second engineer was doin' the chief's dirty work, an' Farlow was backin' him. Did I tell you about it?"

"——, yes! About umpteen times. Listen, Alf, what are you goin' to do? What plans you got?"

"Ah, hah!" said Coley. "That's tellin'."

He rose to his feet.

"Hang on, Moss, I'll buy some more beer for yer."

Though unable to see him, Red had a mental impression, remembering what he had looked like at Well Close Square, of almost intolerable ferocity and cruelty. He shuddered. He had no actual fear of Coley, but the need for caution grew more urgent. Coley would show him no mercy if he failed to beat him. In a fair fight, though, he knew that his chance was good. But would Coley fight fair? Why should he think that? Boots, fists, teeth, a knife, even—Coley would use which suited him best.

He gathered from what he had heard that there was an elderly man, a capitalist with money, who had a sick son at Moss's house, and Moss and Coley, a pretty pair, by ——, had persuaded the son to write a letter to his father, saying he was sick and wanted to go home, and the father would leave the theater at once and go to Moss' house, wherever it was, and find Coley. And then God help him, if he didn't do what Coley wanted!

HINGS like that did happen, thought Red, and old Farlow, or whatever his name was, must take care of himself. His own energy was directed now toward getting hold of Coley, without Moss' being near to help him, and to mark the swine with his two fists so that when he returned to Well Close Square the people there would know that he had met his match at last and in a stand up fight wasn't the man they imagined.

Coley came back to the table again.

"Here's health!" he said and they drank. Presently he said, "Does the young feller want to go 'ome?"

"Does 'e? ——! Listen, Alf, I ain't told you, but since he run away, after his row with the old man, he's been in prison."

"Prison?" said Coley. "Whaffor."

"Pinched some grub. Told me, he did, he was hungry—starvin', almost. He was found in a house one night an' pinched. He wouldn't give 'is name to the police or say anything about 'imself. Queer, ain't it?"

"Got any proofs?"

"What you want proofs for?"

"Don't you 'old anything back on me, Moss, or I'll just about lay you open."

"I got no proofs," said Moss sulkily,

"only the boy's word. But I know when it happened an' where—an' that's all."

"H'm!" Coley grunted. "Prison. I've waited a long time to get old Farlow; an' 'ere he is at last, fallin' into me two 'ands." He broke off with an oath. "I'd like to swing for 'im."

Red, listening and snoring gently, felt that he meant it.

"Let's be pushin' off, Alf, it's gettin' on for time." Moss stood up.

"The old gal know 'er work?"

"Good as if she was playin' a part at the Old Vic 'erself. She takes the note across an' gives it to one of the program sellers or some one, see. Then he, or she, whichever it is, takes it to the old man in 'is box. Come on, Alf, let's go."

Red heard their footsteps departing and raised his head cautiously, and in case any one else was watching him yawned elaborately.

Coley and Moss had gone.

He rose to his feet and slouched lazily, still pretending to be half drunk, to the door.

The two men were nowhere in sight.

He walked into the middle of the street and looked in the direction of the Waterloo Road, then he turned and went to the archway the other side of The Hole in the Wall and looked up Agnes Street.

Coley had slipped away from him, after all.

He stood for a while, his hands in his pockets, thinking.

Coley had gone to Moss's house, wherever that might be. But some woman, a friend of Moss's, was taking the boy's message to the theater. What would be easier, then, than to wait outside the theater, keeping his eyes open, until the man called Farlow came out and spoke to the woman. He could follow the pair of them to Moss' house where, if he had the luck he hoped, he might find Coley alone and give him his thrashing.

Better by far meet Coley in a house than in an open street where the police might stop them and run them in.

IX

JILL FARLOW, a pretty, fair-haired young girl, sat by herself in a box at the Old Vic. The curtain had fallen for the interval between the second and last acts, the lights had been switched on and the orchestra was playing.

She leaned forward and studied the crowded house gravely, the packed stalls and circle and gallery, seen through a mist of cigaret smoke, her blue eyes twinkled and her lips twitched into a smile as she watched the faces of men and women near her who were, in her opinion, either interesting or amusing. And all the while the murmur of voices and the laughter and the music of the orchestra blended in her ears in a harmony that reminded her—foolishly, she knew—of a windy, sunny day by the sea.

And then Jill realized that people were watching her, with perhaps as much interest and amusement in their looks as she had been showing in hers, and she felt her cheeks go hot and she patted her shingled hair nervously with a slim hand and was indignant with herself for blushing so hotly and angry that strangers should have been staring at her as if she, herself, were part of the show they had paid their money to see.

No theater made such an appeal to her as did the Old Vic., where one did not have to dress or wear expensive jewels, where the stalls were no more than five shillings each and the gallery five pence, where every seat in the house was filled and a wildly appreciative audience, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, sat through plays performed nowhere else in London but here, or if performed at all, performed to empty houses, and each player was greeted as an old and personal friend and one saw the finest acting in the world.

There was one flaw in the evening's enjoyment for Jill Farlow. Her father was not with her.

She was not anxious about him; he was busy, but she hoped that even now he would arrive in time for the last act.

The door of the box opened.

Jill glanced quickly about and saw a woman, one of the program sellers, and people who were watching saw a look of disappointment in her blue eyes and they asked each other why such a pretty, jolly-looking girl could be so sad. The family in the box opposite, a father and mother, and a plain, elderly cousin who was a governess somewhere in the country, and a sentimental eighteen-year-old son, agreed that she was waiting for her lover who had not yet arrived, and two old ladies in the front row of the stalls thought it very wrong that a girl of her age, so young and

pretty, should be allowed out by herself so late at night, even to see Shakespeare; and half a dozen young men, clerks in offices and banks, and one, a Rugger blue from Cambridge who hated Shakespeare like poison, but had come with his sister to what was to his mind a thoroughly boring entertainment, wondered, each one of them, why it was that never yet had a man had the good fortune to be introduced to a girl like that.

The program seller, who knew Jill, said—

"Miss Farlow, here's a note been brought to the theater by some one for Mr. Farlow."

"For my father," Jill said. "That's strange."

She read the envelope: R. B. Farlow, Esq. Yes, that was father all right. But who had written it? The handwriting seemed disquietingly familiar—like her brother's but not so firm.

She tore open the envelope and read the letter.

> DEAR FATHER: I'm finished. I'm sorry for what I did. I've had a hard time of it lately and am sick. I would be glad if you could come and see me in the house where I am stopping. Then I could explain. You were right when you said I'd regret it if I left home like that. I have. I'm a failure and always will be. But don't think that I didn't try. I did. It was my own fault, though, that I didn't make good. JACK.

The girl hid her agitation by an effort of will.

She thought quickly: Jack's written. He learned that father was to be at the theater. How did he learn? Well, that doesn't matter. The point is, father isn't here and Jack's sick. Well, I've got to go to him, and at once.

The people in the audience who were watching her saw her rise to her feet quickly and leave the box. They wondered what was the message that the program seller had brought. Was it bad news? They hoped it wasn't! But, bad news or good, the girl had gone. To the young Cambridge Rugger blue the rest of the evening would be a blank unless the girl returned.

Jill followed the program seller up the narrow gangway between the stalls and the outer wall of the theater, past the bar where coffee and tea and cakes were being sold, and out into the narrow, crowded vestibule.

The program seller led Jill to a little, thin woman with a pinched, frightened face, dressed in a shabby frock with a clean white apron around her waist and a black bonnet perched rather far back on her head.

"This is the woman who brought the letter, Miss Farlow."

Jill spoke to her.

"You brought a letter addressed to Mr. Farlow?"

The woman looked terrified.

"Yes, miss. I did. A letter to Mr. Farlow."

"Mr. Farlow is my father. He's not here. I'm coming with you."

"Oh!" said the woman. "Oh!" She gasped, rather like some one immersed suddenly in ice cold water. "I was told to bring Mr. Farlow."

"But Mr. Farlow's not here," said Jill impatiently. "I'm his daughter. Don't waste any more time, please."

The woman, still with the same terrified look in her eyes that Jill did not understand, muttered—

"It ain't a very nice part where I got to take you."

"That doesn't matter," said Jill. "Make haste, that's all."

The woman turned and led the way out into the street.

And Red Wilson, watching for the shabby woman to leave the theater with an elderly man, saw instead of the elderly man a tall, slender young girl in a short skirted pink frock, over which was thrown a soft white cloak, and pale pink silk stockings and slippers. She was very pretty and wore no hat, her short golden hair waved back from her forehead, her cheeks were pink, her blue eyes showed a kind of excitement, she was smiling and yet her whole appearance gave him an impression of anxiety and care and worry.

"This way, miss." Red heard the woman say to her.

They moved, side by side, past the entrance to Webber Street, past the pawnbroker's on the corner, and diagonally across the New Cut, the shops on either side closed for the night and the smooth surface of the street littered with scraps of paper and straw and orange peel and banana skins and moldy fruit, where the costermongers and cheap jacks and hucksters had traded and had their stalls and barrows.

RED, puzzled that a young girl whose appearance and manner and way of holding herself was beyond the range of his experience and placed her immeasurably above any girl he had ever before seen, should be with the shabby little woman, puzzled and a little worried, followed them along the north side of the New Cut toward Great Charlotte Street and the Ring, where once he had boxed, more or less for a joke, and won the decision in two rounds, and the Blackfriars Road, where once he had lived for a week in a cheap doss house, between ship and ship.

The shabby little woman hesitated at a dark turning where on one corner there was a provision merchant's and on the other a public house.

"What is it now?" said the girl.

"It's dahn 'ere, miss. Are you certain you want to come?"

"Of course I want to come! Didn't I say so?"

The woman and the girl moved on down the narrow, cobbled slope toward a railway bridge and a huddle of closely packed small houses, little dark side streets, courts and alleys, so badly lighted by old fashioned gas-lamps that it was difficult to tell quite where one was going.

Red followed, more vigilant now than at any time during his journey from Well Close Square, on the alert for anything that might happen—an unsuspected attack, a sudden meeting with Coley, the need to fight and fight hard, perhaps against odds. He wondered whether the house to which the woman was taking the girl was through the arch, the other side of the railway, nearer the river or not. Either way, he was beginning to be worried. He was, he felt, out of his reckoning at last, in a part of London that was quite new to him and therefore, as in some foreign port visited for the first time, dangerous and not to be trusted too far.

Before they came to the railway arch and the darkness beyond, they reached a street that cut across the street down which they were walking at right angles.

Red heard the woman say:

"This is the street, miss, 'ere." She pointed toward the left. "An' that's the 'ouse, miss."

Red halted at the corner, afraid that they might see him. The street, which reminded him of one of the desolate little streets of Tiger Bay off Bute Street, Cardiff, was very narrow and dirty and dark. On either side were tiny, shabby houses that depressed one even to see, most of the ground floor windows were shuttered for the night; most of the front doors were closed; only very few lights were visible, and of those few some shone from basement rooms through gratings in the narrow footpaths.

The woman and the girl in her white cloak, more conspicuous now than before, crossed the street.

Still standing at the corner, Red watched the woman push open the door which was painted green, like all the other doors. The girl entered the small house. The woman stood on the doorstep, listening.

Red reached her and said gruffly—

"Let me pass, please."

"Who are you?" said the woman breathlessly.

A man came hurrying up:

"For —— syke, what is it?" he said. "That's old Farlow's girl."

Red recognized Moss, the man he had seen with Coley. He seemed, like the shabby woman, frightened.

"Out o' the way, Moss," he said. "I'm a friend of Coley's."

He had pushed past the woman when Moss grabbed him by the arm.

"What d'you think you're doin', goin' in there? Coley don't want yer."

Red hit him under the chin. Moss fell in a heap on the footpath. The shabby little woman scuttled away.

Red entered the house and shut the door and turned the key in the lock.

The narrow little entrance hall was dark but he heard the girl say timidly—

"Are you there, Jack?"

There was no reply.

Red moved softly, cautiously, away from the locked door and saw the girl in her white cloak on the stairs, her fair head and her shoulders visible against the dim light of the upper landing.

"Jack!" she called. "Where are you?"

A floor board creaked and Red began to crawl up the tiny flight of stairs after the girl.

She reached the landing and stopped and uttered a little scream of fear.

From where Red crouched he could see Coley himself standing in the open doorway of a lighted room.

X

"WHO the —— are you?" said Coley roughly.

"I'm Miss Farlow," said the girl with a quaver in her voice. "Jill Farlow. My brother Jack is here and he's ill."

Coley began to laugh.

"Well, by ——! You're old Farlow's daughter, ain't you?"

He advanced and caught the girl by the wrist.

"I'll show you yer brother, kid, you come with me."

"Let go!" said the girl sharply. "Do you hear me?" There was, Red thought, something rather fine in the way she faced Coley. "Let go my wrist. I've come for my brother."

"You won't see no brother!" said Coley. "The feller you're goin' to see, my beauty, is me. A nice-lookin' little gal, like you, don't need to go lookin' for brothers this time o' night. Come an' gimme a kiss."

The girl wrenched her wrist free and hit Coley in the face with her fist.

"You beast!" she said.

Red, creeping cautiously up the stairs, knew that the time had come. Never again would he have a better opportunity of thrashing Coley than now, here in this quiet, dark, evil-smelling, poisonous little house.

He heard Coley say:

"All right, kid, now you're for it. I don't let no —— Jane get fresh with me."

He heard the girl say—

"You beast!" once more.

He heard a tired voice say, "Jill!" and saw standing in another doorway, leaning against the door post, a thin, white-faced boy in an old suit and wearing no collar.

And then, without waiting to hear what the girl would say, knowing that this was the brother she had come to find, Red brushed roughly past her and hit Coley with all his might on the tip of his hooked nose.

Coley screeched and went staggering back off his balance through the open doorway.

Red gave him no time to recover but rushed him, hitting hard with both fists, back into a small bedroom, lighted by an oil-lamp that stood on a chest of drawers; a small, stuffy bedroom that smelt of mice and damp washing and dirt.

"—— you!" roared Coley. "You'll pay for this."

Red drove him toward the window covered with a torn blind.

Coley swung his fists at him, left and right, and missed both times. Red crashed his right against his thick neck under his left ear and grinned.

"Easy!" he said. "Coley, you're easy."

He felt that his grievance against Coley had given him a hitting power greater than he had ever before had. He was stronger than this bullock of a man, more active, quicker on his feet, more sure of himself.

He drove his right again and again into Coley's face, propping him off with a straight left, moving swiftly in and out, giving him no rest, taking inevitable risks yet keeping as far as possible out of the way of his big fists, being hit but feeling no actual pain, though he knew from the taste of hot salt blood he was bleeding. He did not care what punishment he took so long as he punished Coley. Coley was bleeding, too; he could see the blood on his lips and chin; he could see the rage in his small, dark eyes, set so close together under the bushy eyebrows; he could see the gap in his teeth he remembered having seen at Well Close Square. For an instant his thoughts wandered.

A fierce left uppercut, delivered with a grunt, caught him a glancing blow on his face; he rocked on his feet, off his balance for the instant, avoided a savage, half arm blow from Coley's right by a quick side step and then drove his left with all his strength into Coley's body.

Coley gasped and reeled back against the washstand which fell with a crash of breaking crockery when he sprang forward once more. Red's knuckles scrunched against a broken tooth as he met him with a left-hand drive flush in the mouth. Coley whirled round helplessly and sank to his knees.

Red stepped back and eyed him with grim satisfaction, panting for breath.

"Had enough, you —— swine?" he said. "Seven, eight—had enough? Get up, if you haven't, and have some more—nine, ten. Coley, you're out!"

Coley held on to the chest of drawers and helped himself to his feet very slowly. He stood for a while, supporting himself with his right hand on the top of the chest of drawers, holding his left hand to his face, the blood trickling slowly down over his fingers.

"—— you!" he said. "I'll get you yet. Wait."

He dropped his left hand to his side and looked stupidly around, first to the left and then to the right, as if searching for something vitally important he had lost.

Red, watching him closely, ready for him to attack, saw his right hand move quickly in the direction of the lighted oil-lamp.

"Stop that!" he shouted.

He had time to dodge, but only just, as Coley threw.

The lamp, flaming and smoking, smashed against the wall above the bed.

As Red rushed once more, in a blind fury, dazed by the sudden darkness, he was deafened by the devastating, ear-splitting crash of a revolver fired at close range, another crash, a flash of light close to his face, so close that he thought he must have been hit.

He staggered and then, shaken and badly scared, closed with the man who had tried deliberately to kill him.

BY CHANCE his left hand grabbed Coley's right and gripped the fingers so hard that he could neither turn the revolver toward him nor press the trigger. He slammed his right against Coley's body, again and again, swift half arm jabs, until Coley, snarling angrily as a dog, flung his left arm about his neck and held him tight and with his sharp nails tore at his throat.

Red, fighting now for his life, knowing that Coley would have no mercy on him if he got him down, was dimly conscious that the darkness was already less dark by reason of a queer, flickering glow of light reflected on the window blind and wall.

They wrestled to and fro, saying nothing but breathing harshly, their feet scuffling on the bare floor boards, their bodies colliding heavily with the chest of drawers, the walls, a wardrobe. The yellow window blind was ripped from the roller, the glass and woodwork of the window crashed outward under the impact of Coley's head and shoulders.

Red, panic-stricken by the thought that perhaps Coley was too strong for him, after all, raised his right hand and tugged at the arm about his neck that was choking him; his left hand pressed Coley's right farther and farther back. Suddenly Coley screamed and dropped the revolver on to the floor under the window. Able at last to use his left, Red hit him under the jaw, a succession of clumsy, round-arm blows that had the effect of making Coley's left arm gradually relax its grip.

But even now Red found that he was not yet free. There was a sharp, cutting pain at the back of his neck, for which he could not account. And then he remembered the pendant Mrs. Hartigan had put into his pocket and which he had slipped over his head in the turning off Cable Street and he knew that in saving himself from falling Coley had clawed at the thin platinum chain.

Thrusting him back against the side of the empty window frame, Red felt for the ruby under the knotted handkerchief.

"Let go, Coley, do you hear!" he growled. "Let go that chain!"

The light in the room had grown stronger. There was a crackling sound and the acrid smell of burning wood and smoke and a strange and uncomfortable warmth.

A voice was crying:

"Stop fighting! Oh, do stop fighting! The house is on fire!"

Coley still held the chain about Red's neck.

"Let go, Coley! Let go, —— you!"

Red put the last remnants of his strength into a fierce drive with his right that caught Coley on the point of his chin.

"——!" said Coley.

The chain snapped. He staggered away from Red, clutched frantically at the sides of the broken window frame, overbalanced and fell backward out of the window.

Red shuddered as he heard his scream and the thud of his body striking the ground.

He turned, then, and with a stifled, helpless feeling saw that the bed and some clothes hanging on the wall, the door and the floor near the door were in flames, burning furiously.

He stared for a moment, unable to move.

Coley had thrown the lamp at him and set the house on fire. He must make haste, if he didn't want to be burned. There was the girl, as well, and her brother. He wondered dully if they had had sense enough to escape while he was fighting Coley.

He leaned out of the window. In the little back yard beneath him he saw Coley lying very still and twisted. There, he decided, was his one hope. He crawled out of the window, lowered himself by his hands and knees and dropped, bareheaded, his

jacket and waistcoat torn, the knotted handkerchief about his neck untied, the buttons ripped off his shirt. Without pausing to see whether Coley were hurt or not, he pushed open the back door and entered the house which was so full of smoke that it was difficult to breathe.

He felt his way toward the stairs.

"Miss Farlow!" he shouted. "Where are you?"

The girl called to him faintly:

"Oh, please help us. Please!"

In the darkness Red managed to make out the form of the girl, crouching, it seemed, between the stairs and the front door on which some one was pounding heavily.

"Are you all right?" asked Red.

"Yes," said the girl. "I'm all right. It's my brother. I got him downstairs, but he's fainted. He's not very strong—"

"Leave him to me!" said Red. "Open the front door, quick."

He stooped and with an effort lifted the boy in his arms and staggered toward where he could hear the girl fumbling with the key.

The door opened and they passed out into the fresh air.

Already people had gathered together; windows in the houses opposite had been thrown up; men and women came running out of their front doors.

"Bring 'im into my 'ouse, mate," said some one. "This w'y."

"No," said the girl. "No, please not." She spoke in an agitated, husky tone. "No. Can't we get him to the theater? There's the car coming for me. I can take him home."

"Why, yes," said Red. "Yes." He heard the bell of a fire engine and wanted to get away while there was time. "Let's be moving."

A policeman was forcing his way through the crowd. He called to Red:

"Is there any one else in that house?"

"Don't think so," said Red. "No."

"What's been happening?" said the policeman sharply. "Is that feller hurt?"

"He's sick. We're going to get a doctor for him."

And whatever happened, he thought, the policeman mustn't stop them and take their names. The girl mustn't get mixed up in a show like this. Nor must he.

"Let's pass," said Red.

"Just a minute," said the policeman. Moss ran toward the open door and he turned and grabbed him by the arm.

"Come here, you! Where d'you think you're going?"

The clanging of a bell and the roar of a motor traveling at a high rate of speed grew louder and louder.

"Get back!" shouted the policeman. "Right back."

The crowd parted. A long red ladder truck with the dark figures of the firemen and the lights reflected on their brass helmets came racing along the dark and narrow little street from the direction of the Waterloo Road and drew up in front of the burning house.

Still carrying the boy, one arm dangling, the other about his neck, Red managed to push through the pack of men and women pressed back against the houses.

"It won't be far," he said to the girl. "Once we're clear we're just about there."

The boy stirred in his arms.

"Better put me down now. I'm quite O. K."

"No," said Red. "Not yet."

"There's the engine coming," said the girl. "Do you hear it?" She went on without waiting for Red to answer. "Aren't you tired?"

"Ah!" said Red. And that was all. But tired. Yes. So —— tired he could scarcely push one foot in front of the other.

THEY were clear of the crowd, at last. But the boy he carried, although he was only skin and bones, was heavier than he had thought and his ankle was hurting once more and men and women kept trying to stop them and ask more questions, the —— fools. Others were running toward the fire as fast as they could and it was difficult to make much headway and to watch where one was going and not stumble or even fall, which would have meant having a rest, anyway, for a time, at least, and ——! how much farther was the —— street that would take them back to the theater. And at any moment another —— policeman might show up and insist on trying to help them and lord! that wouldn't do at all.

There was another noisy clanging and the fire engine, gleaming brass and copper, slowed down for the corner and passed on down the street.

"They'll have it out in two ticks," said Red.

He remembered Coley.

He had whipped him, just as he'd made up his mind to; and Coley, the ——, miserable hound, had tried to murder him. Shot at him, twice. He wondered, with a curious sense of not being responsible, whether Coley had climbed the wall into the next back yard, or whether he had broken a leg in falling, and was unable to move. Either way, there was nothing to worry about. Coley was safe where he was—some one would see him and get him away.

They had reached the corner. Red halted.

"Can you stand?" he asked. "I'm about all in."

"I think so," said the boy. He leaned against the side of a house and put his hands to his head.

"Jack," said the girl, "are you feeling very bad?"

By the light of a street lamp her face looked strained and anxious. She had lost her white cloak, Red noticed, and her pink frock was soiled and crumpled.

"I'm all right," said the boy. "Practically." He laughed huskily and began to cough. "Lord! Jill, is that you? Didn't I go off into a faint or something? The house was on fire and I fell and some one was fighting some one else. Chap with red hair."

"Shall we go on now?" said Red. "I can carry you again."

"Lord, no! I'll walk," said the boy. "I'm not a cripple. Bad cough, that's all!"

They moved slowly to the left up a dark street, wider than the street they had left, past a timber yard and works and factories.

"The New Cut's straight ahead," said Red. "Better take my arm, son, I'll help."

"This isn't the way I came," said the girl.

"No," said Red. "I followed you."

"Followed me? How? I got a note in the theater from my brother here, saying he was ill. He wanted to see my father."

"Man called Moss," said Red gruffly. "Overheard him and that man I had the fight with, talking together. I lost track of them and had to go to the theater and wait there for the woman to come out. I thought there'd be some man with her but there wasn't."

"Moss was our chauffeur once," said the girl. "He drank and we had to get rid of him. And it was Moss I was sure I saw trying to get into the house. He was the man the policeman stopped. I can't understand it!

"It was Moss' place I was staying in," said her brother. "He ran across me a couple of days ago at the Elephant and Castle and took me home with him. It was kind of him. I thought it was, anyway. But now—dunno. I'm not so sure."

"Even now I don't understand how that other man came to be mixed up in it." The girl shuddered. "He was the most terrible creature I've ever seen. I thought he was going to kill me or—or something."

"He was pretty tough, miss, yes," said Red.

"Did he hurt you?"

"No, miss."

"You know your face is all over blood, don't you?"

"I didn't, miss. It'll wash off."

She laughed under her breath, puzzled by his manner, amused, perhaps, and a little touched.

They emerged from the side street into the New Cut, opposite the Old Vic.

"Jill, for ——'s sake, where have you been?"

Red saw an elderly, gray-headed man in a dark suit.

"Father," said the girl, "I've found Jack. Where's the car? He's ill. We've got to get him home."

"Jack!" said the elderly man. "Jack!" He caught hold of the boy's arm. "So glad," he said.

There was a look in his weather-beaten, wrinkled face that made Red feel restless and uncomfortable.

He whispered to the girl.

"I'm going now, miss. Good-by."

"You're not going," said the girl. She clutched at his arm. "I won't have it!" The elderly man had beckoned toward a big Rolls-Royce that had drawn up a little way off nearer the theater. "Father, but for this gentleman I'd have been dead. Or you would! He's saved our lives. My life, anyway—probably, Jack's as well."

Jill's father saw a young man with the reddest hair he had ever seen and torn and dusty clothes; there was blood smeared all over his tanned and freckled face; his eyes were worn and tired-looking; from his appearance he seemed to have passed through some ordeal that had sapped his vitality and left him exhausted.

He did not understand how a young man of this type, exactly, however worthy, happened to be with Jill, but that could

wait; there was no time for explaining things now.

The car glided smoothly up to where they stood, surrounded by a small group of spectators.

"Get in, Jack. Let me give you a hand. Jill, make haste."

Jill still clung to Red's arm.

"You, too. You must."

"Of course," said Jill's father.

Red shook his head. And when he saw a policeman approaching from the other side of the street.

"I'll sit in front with the driver."

"You won't!" said Jill." You'll sit with us. Do you hear?"

Red was too tired and shaken to argue. It made no difference where he sat. In front with the driver or inside with these queer, rich people it was all the same to him.

XI

THE Farlows, Red discovered, lived off Bond Street, in Bruton Street, in a part of London called Mayfair which he'd read of in books and knew vaguely by repute but where he was as much out of his reckoning as when he had been following the shabby woman and the girl south of the river by Waterloo. The only London he knew really well ended at Aldgate, where he had climbed on to the bus after Coley.

The Farlows meant to be kind, no doubt; but the fact was they just didn't understand.

He wasn't their class. His ideas and their ideas were different. Bound to be different. They were rich and he was poor. They had everything, he had nothing. He didn't envy them, exactly—he didn't envy any one—but to live in a house like this house would make a man look at things from another point of view than the point of view he'd have if he'd been living in Limehouse with the Hartigans or in some sailors' boarding house off Bute Street, Cardiff. And why not?

All alone in a large, wonderfully furnished room, Red sat rather on the edge of a padded, high-backed chair, with polished spindly arms and legs, and looked curiously about him.

Dark oil paintings, landscapes, framed in old gold, hung on the paneled walls; on his right was a large, carved oak mantelpiece on which were small ornaments of bronze; and a big fireplace of some pinkish marble and polished steel, half hidden by a small silk screen mounted on a framework of gilded wood and decorated with hand-painted figures of men and girls; there were book-shelves everywhere, filled with books bound in brown leather; on the polished floor were rugs such as he had seen out East in the bazaars, only these were better, softer and with richer colors; from the ceiling was suspended a big crystal candelabra, in which the candles were really little electric lamps; a grandfather's clock with a large painted face ticked solemnly in a corner; on the tables and the tops of the book-shelves were tall Oriental vases—again Red thought of the bazaars—in which were great masses of white lilac, and red and yellow roses, and lilies; two tall windows with lace curtains swaying in the breeze were wide open to the night.

Never in all his life had he been in a room like this—so luxurious and extravagant and comfortable. He was out of keeping with his surroundings. Everything was too grand and expensive and spotless. Though he had had a wash and the blood no longer covered his bruised face, and his thatch of red hair was comparatively smooth and his hands were clean, he felt grimy and soiled and disreputable.

And what, he asked himself, was he, of all men, a Red, doing in a rich man's library, however nice that man might be. For, of course, putting aside prejudice and the undoubted truth that no man could be rich without oppressing the poor, old Farlow was nice. He had done his best, anyway, to show himself friendly. So had the girl. And so, as far as that went, had the girl's brother who had been taken upstairs to bed as soon as they reached the house and was being looked after now by a doctor.

The door opened and Red stood up as the girl came quickly into the room, followed by her father.

"I hope we've not kept you waiting too long, Mr. Wilson," she said. "Do sit down again, please."

She was dressed now in a frock of some kind of gold stuff that in a way matched the gold of her short hair and fitted her slim figure closely and had a short skirt that flared out on either side, gold silk stockings and gold high-heeled slippers.

Red regarded her almost with awe, as though he saw her for the first time, and

for no reason at all he felt scared and more out of place than ever.

He had often argued aboard ship that just because some people dressed better than other people, that didn't prove they were better, only that they had more money. But now, in the presence of Miss Farlow, his philosophy failed him. He had a feeling that this girl with the fair hair and the tired blue eyes and the sad mouth, who was prettier than any girl he had ever talked to, looked on him as an inferior and a nuisance to whom she had to show a certain amount of politeness because she was a lady and he had done her a service.

Which, naturally, wasn't the thing he'd submit to for a moment.

"I'm afraid I've got to be going," said Red. "It's late."

The girl's father dropped on to a couch near the chair where Red had been sitting.

"Sit down," he said. "I must talk to you. Sit down, Jill."

And he, too, like the girl looked sad and tired.

"I've had to leave you alone while I heard what the doctor had to say about my boy. I'm thankful to say he'll pull through with care. I'm worried, though, of course. Well, let's leave it at that. Mr. Wilson, you've placed me under a debt of gratitude I don't know how I'm ever going to repay. Even now it's hard to realize that but for you my daughter might have been dead! My son, too. It's—well, it's inconceivable."

He rose from the couch and walked toward one of the two tall windows and stood for a while gazing out into the street, his hands in his pockets.

The girl leaned forward, her elbows on the arms of her chair, her hands clasped.

"What father says is true. We don't know how we're going to begin telling you how awfully grateful we are. We'll never forget." She smiled at him. "I won't, anyway."

Her father came back from the window and stood by the table on which was a bowl of red roses near where the girl was sitting.

"What I'd like to find out, but I don't know how I can until we get Moss, who was the man who was waiting for me and whom you fought. That's something I can't understand."

Red stirred uneasily in his chair.

"I ought to tell you the only reason I was outside the theater was I'd been trailing the man for half an hour, more, maybe, waiting an opportunity, like, to—well, to fight him."

"Yes," said the girl, not in the least shocked. "Yes."

"Go ahead," said her father. "An opportunity to fight him."

"Yes, sir. He'd taken me unawares, and knocked me out before I'd a chance to defend myself, and for no reason. Most of these marks on my face were there before I reached the Old Vic at all. I'd followed him all the way from the London Docks to Waterloo, where he met this man, Moss, and talked to him in a public house near the station. I heard enough of what they said to each other to know he was trying go get some one—you, sir, I heard the name—into Moss's house, where he—that's to say, you, sir—wouldn't get free no matter how hard you twisted—or that's what he said. I couldn't start scrapping—fighting, I mean—then and there, of course; it wouldn't have been safe. I wanted to get Coley all by himself. I was pretty sure I could tackle him, but I wouldn't be able to tackle him and Moss as well. And then they went out of the public house and I lost them. I knew about the theater. So that's where I waited and that's how I saw Miss Farlow."

"Coley," said Jill. Haven't I heard the name somewhere."

"Ship's fireman. Did twelve months' hard for knocking his second engineer out," said Red. "So I heard."

"Good lord!" said Jill's father. "That's the man I gave evidence against up north. And so it was Coley talked to Moss, was it? And Moss wanted to get back at me because I'd discharged him for being drunk." He laughed. "Moss and Coley. A pretty couple. And Coley was waiting for me in that house and he tried to kill you. Well, Mr. Wilson, I don't like to think too much of what might have happened. You've saved my girl's life and my son's life. Mr. Wilson, my house is yours."

HE INCLINED his head in a kind of bow. Red felt confused and not quite sure whether he was being laughed at or not.

"No, sir, I guess I didn't really do anything. What I wanted to do was to lick Coley, that's all, sir."

"Yes," said the girl, "but you came back into the house, after you'd climbed out of the window and brought Jack and me out, didn't you? And you got me away from Coley, didn't you? You couldn't have done more very well, could you?"

"You say this Coley fell out of the window?" said the girl's father.

"Yes, sir. After I made him drop his gun, as I told you, he had hold of a small chain I was wearing around my neck, and when that broke he went backward through the window and fell into the yard. I saw him lying there when I dropped; I couldn't go through the bedroom door because of the fire; but I didn't have time to pick him up or ask if he was hurt. I didn't feel that way inclined, either."

"How long have you known him?" said Jill.

"Never met him in my life," said Red.

Father and daughter gazed at him in bewilderment.

"Never met him!"

"Not till he knocked me out. But I'd spent a couple of hours before that trying to find him; that's to say, I started from Millwall Dock and ended up near Well Street, London Dock, where he lived. And so, that's why, when I did meet him and learned what kind of a man he was, it came as a shock. A man told me Coley was a friend of his and if I once got to know him I'd like him. Coley was, so he said, after my way of thinking. He had the same view I had about economics, politics and such like."

Again Red was confused and embarrassed. These people were nice people, but enemies, of course, to him and his class.

"If it isn't a rude question, Mr. Wilson," said the girl's father, "what do you do for a living?"

"I'm a sailor," said Red. "I lost my ship."

"Lost?" said Jill. "Wrecked?"

"No, miss. I'm only an A. B. My ship sailed without me. As a matter of fact—" here he chuckled—"the bosun and I didn't hit it off together. You see, miss, I'm a Communist. I guess you won't think any too well of me for that, but it's the way I look at things. We're all equal, and I'm as good as any one else. That kind of thing. I'm what they call a Red. In fact, I'm known as Red; part because of my hair, I guess, part because of what I believe. Anyway, this man, Deacon, was trying to get a shipmate of mine, MacTavish, to pay him some money and he'd let him into a secret of how to make a fortune and I told MacTavish not to listen to him. And so, of course, Deacon wanted to get back at me."

"And Deacon," said the girl. "Who was he?"

"Deacon," said Red, "was the man who sent me to Coley. Coley, he said, would help me. He was a Red, too. But he was telling lies. Coley wasn't a friend. As soon as I said Deacon had sent me, he laid me out."

"H'm!" said the girl's father. "H'm! This business is getting complicated. I think, between you and me, Coley needs locking up again. I'm afraid I'll have to go to Scotland Yard first thing in the morning—I won't bother tonight, I'm worried about Jack. The point is, Mr. Wilson, if Coley's escaped, I don't know how I can keep your name out of it. No one else can identify him."

"I've nothing to hide from Scotland Yard," said Red.

"You weren't armed were you?"

"Lord, no!" said Red.

"Because if Coley was hurt when he fell, the police will have got him and he may have said you threw him out of the window, and unless the revolver had been found—well, you see what I mean, don't you? That's why I'll try and keep you out of it."

"He doesn't know who I am," said Red.

"But in any case you've nothing to be afraid of. You heard Moss and Coley talking; you knew they were going to get me into their power, Coley was, anyway, and you saw Coley threaten my girl in the house and try to molest her. But I believe my evidence alone would be enough; what Coley said to me in the dock and why I got rid of Moss."

"My evidence, too," said the girl with a little shiver. Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes were suddenly clouded. "I'd begun to lose hope when I saw you, Mr. Wilson. And then—why, then I knew I was saved. I don't like to talk of rewarding you or anything like that, but isn't there something father could do to help you? Maybe I oughtn't to be talking like this, but I feel we owe you so much, Jack and I, and we'd like all of us, to—well, give you a start. I'm saying something I oughtn't to say, am I?"

Red smiled faintly and shook his head.

"No, miss, that's all right, of course.

But there's nothing I want. Nothing at all."

That was a lie, of course. He wanted a good many things. He wanted to live in a house like this, not so big, perhaps, but as clean and comfortable and beautiful; he wanted books, like these books, and pictures; he wanted freedom from anxiety and the fear of poverty; he wanted to be respected by other men and looked upon as an ordinary decent man and not, because he was a sailor before the mast, as a kind of animal. He wanted to be able to mix with people like these people, not rich people so much as people who could talk about other things besides booze and fights and the sea and what they did talk about in tramp forecastles and pubs and sailors' boarding houses.

But what was the good? Why grouse? He was nothing, a poor —— deck-hand, a Red, who wanted to make the world easier for a crowd of stiffs like MacTavish and Deacon and the boatswain and Chips and George, the barman, and Chadwick, the man with the scrubby yellow mustache, and the bus conductor, and the Hartigans, and Bessie, the girl, and her father and mother, and the guard of the train who had told him to pay excess, and the husband and wife he'd met in West Ferry Road, and the woman who'd stolen the money from the two little kids in Cable Street, and Coley and Mrs. Coley, and Moss, and the shabby woman who had taken Moss' message to the Old Vic, he wanted to make the world easier for the lot of them; and there wasn't one of them, hardly, that was worth a —— when you got down to it, hardly one, except MacTavish, of course, or that's what you'd have thought to meet them and hear them talk and have to depend on their word.

Yet, maybe, if things were easier, and they hadn't to fight and scheme and plan and steal to get a living and enough to eat and a bit of comfort, they'd be more worth while, the lot of them, more honest, more likable, more to be trusted. But what was the good? Life was tough, more tough than it need have been, if men and women would only think less of themselves now and again and more about other people. But there it was—all one could do was to make the best of it and show people like these Farlows, rich people, that people like him didn't envy them or want what one hadn't got.

Red sat frowning at the rug at his feet.

He looked up suddenly and found that the girl and her father were watching him gravely. Their looks puzzled him. For an instant he felt that they knew what he was thinking and disapproved.

He laughed awkwardly.

"There's one thing," he said, "yes. I want a ship. I'm tired of being ashore. I've had more trouble and worry since I left my ship at Millwall Dock tea-time than I've had all the years I've been going to sea. But maybe it'll be difficult, of course. I've lost my kit and my discharge book, as well as my ship."

"That's nothing," said the girl's father. "Makes no difference at all. But are you certain you want to go back to sea?"

"What else is there to do? I'm an A. B. What use would I be ashore now? No use."

"Do you like the sea?" asked the girl.

"The only thing I was ever trained to."

"If you really mean what you've said," said the girl's father, "I'll find you a ship. I'm a ship-owner. I daresay you've heard of me!"

Red hadn't, but he nodded an assent.

"THERE'S a ship of mine, the *Devon Coast*, leaving East India Dock tomorrow afternoon, a day earlier than we expected. You've only to say the word and I'll send you away on her. She's almost a brand new ship; it's her second voyage. Sign on at ten o'clock. You've had a good deal of experience, I take it."

Red laughed.

"Ever since I was about fifteen, sir."

"Ever thought of trying to better yourself?"

"Thought!" said Red. "I've thought about nothing else. But what chance has a man like me? None. My father was English and no good. My mother was Irish and —dunno—I guess life was too tough for her. They died, both of them, when I was seven, in Boston, where I was born. I was sent to an orphanage. I ran away two or three times I hated it so much, but they got me back always. That's why I went to sea. The world hasn't much use for men brought up as I was, without education or money. That's about the one lesson I've learned. If you're down, people don't want you to rise—you're down, you'll keep down. That's life. Well, I can stick it."

And then he laughed to himself, sitting

here in this big room, talking that kind of stuff to these rich folks.

"Sorry," he said, "that's what we call propaganda, isn't it? Not playing the game, like. Abusing hospitality. Well, I'm crazy, I know, not my fault, exactly, born like it. Anyway, I'd be grateful, sir, if you could give me a line to the mate, so that I could be sure of getting away on the *Devon Coast.*"

"Well, now, listen to me, Wilson, I'm going to talk straight. You say you've not had a chance. You're wrong. You've got as good a chance as I had, every bit. You have now. You started with nothing. So did I. I've made my own way. So can you. I worked, you can work, too. I had ambition, so, too, can you have ambition. You say the world has no use for a man like you. There's where you've made your biggest mistake. The world has more use for you than it has for men who've been brought up to wealth.

"Wilson, you've done me the greatest service tonight one man could do another. What you've told me about yourself and your views on life only confirms what I thought of you. What worries me most is you haven't any ambition or hope. You're drifting, like a steamer without any rudder, broken down, and without making any effort, apparently, to get back on your right course. The world's in a bad state, no doubt. It always has been, and while you get men like your friend, Coley, it always will be. Even though you eradicate the abuses we all know of, abuses many of us are trying to eradicate in different ways from the ways you recommend, you'll always have human nature to contend with. Your friends in Russia have proved that you can't change things wholesale, only, I suppose, Mr. Wilson, you wouldn't regard it in that way, quite, would you?"

"Anyway, coming back to yourself, my advice to you is, think as you like, but while you're thinking make the best use you can of what chance you've got. Don't listen too much to what you hear men saying, don't believe all you read in print. The world's a hard old place, but there's good to be found in it, if you know where to look. Here's what I'm driving at—you can do more good as a captain than you can as an A. B. Ever thought of working for your ticket, Mr. Wilson? Second mate. Aren't you tired of serving before the mast? Work for your ticket and go aft."

"Work for my ticket?" said Red.

"Yes. Why not?"

"What chance would I have?"

"The same as any one else who serves his time in the forecastle! You're intelligent, you're young, you've got every quality to make a successful officer except one—you don't believe in yourself. But you ought to, when I tell you there isn't one man in a thousand who'd have done what you did tonight. Whatever your motive may have been in going into that house, you saved my daughter from Coley, you fought him and thrashed him, and you went back into the house again after it was on fire and brought out my son."

"If," said the girl abruptly, "you're asking what chance you'd have, you can take this for an answer—every chance. We'd see that you had it."

"Go this voyage on the *Devon Coast*, then next year when you're back home again, go to a nautical school and work for your ticket. You'll get it. And remember, just as my daughter said, only I'll put it more plainly, I'll back you. Do you understand? You're not to worry about expenses, fees, money, clothes. I'm a man who believes in paying my debts."

"No," said Red. "No. Whatever I do, I've got to do on my own."

And then for a while he thought without speaking. Work for his ticket! So that was it, was it. Second mate. Why not?

"What other men can do, you can do, too," said the girl. "But better."

Red had to laugh. He was pleased that this girl thought sufficiently well of him to say that, but what did she really know of him? Not a thing. She didn't understand what life was. He did.

"Then you'll work for your ticket?" she said.

"Yes, miss, I will," said Red.

"Good!" said the ship-owner. "You'll sign on tomorrow on the *Devon Coast.* I'll arrange that much, at least."

"Aren't you most awfully hungry?" said the girl.

Red hadn't eaten since noon. He grinned.

"Not very," he said.

"Well," said the girl, "you'll be having supper with us in a minute, anyway."

Red was suddenly scared.

"Oh! I don't know about that, miss. I ought to be going."

"That's not the real reason, Red!" she

said. She laughed. "That's what they call you, isn't it? I know what you're thinking. It's nonsense. Aren't you as good as any one else? You said so. You are, of course. You believe it, and so do I, and so does father."

The stout and pompous-looking butler opened the door and the girl jumped up from her chair.

"That's supper, at last. I'm starving."

XII

NEXT morning there appeared in the London papers an account of the fire in a house near the New Cut.

A man called Coley, identified by a letter in his pocket, had fallen from a back window in making his escape from the burning house and been killed. In his hand he had the famous ruby and platinum pendant that had been stolen the previous night from Lady Crestworth outside a theater.

Though Coley had hitherto not been known as a thief, he had been in trouble before and had lately been serving a term of imprisonment for assault in the North of England.

The report of Coley's death had far-reaching effects.

AGAINST his wishes Red spent the night at the Farlows' house in Bruton Street in a bedroom far more luxurious than anything he had imagined or seen, save in the moving pictures.

He was so exhausted that after putting on a pair of Mr. Farlow's silk pajamas and switching off the electric lamp over his head, he fell asleep before he had had time to crawl in between the sheets.

He awoke suddenly, feeling cold, to find it was daylight once more and that Mr. Farlow, fully dressed, stood by the side of his bed, gazing down at him.

Red sat upright at once.

"Have I slept too long?"

"No," said Mr. Farlow, "I'm the only one in the house awake but the nurse who's in charge of my boy. I'm an early riser, always, and I have the morning papers left at the door as soon as they're published. I want you to look at this."

Red took the paper Mr. Farlow held out to him and read under the heading—Jewel Thief's Tragic Death—a report of how Coley had broken his neck in his fall from the window and how the ruby pendant had been found in his hand.

He returned the paper to Mr. Farlow and sat for a time, hugging his knees and thinking. He said presently:

"Well, sir, I guess I'm responsible. I'd better go see Scotland Yard."

"I don't look at it that way at all. If ever there was an accident, it's this. Or if ever a man deserved killing, it was Coley, However, what I want to tell you is so far as I'm concerned it simplifies matters immensely. I'm going to Scotland Yard myself to report what happened and I don't intend to mention your name, if I can help it. Coley's identity is established. He's out of the way. Moss, if I judge him correctly, will be out of the way, too, directly he knows Coley is dead. Anyway, you're not to worry. If I don't see you before you go, I'll see you on board the *Devon Coast*, for certain, this afternoon. I'll speak to the captain about you. And, as I promised, I'll phone the marine superintendent and make sure that you're signed on."

"It's very good of you, sir," said Red.

"I pay my debts," said Mr. Farlow. "And I like you."

MACTAVISH had not been arrested.

After hitting the policeman he had turned and bolted through the traffic of Commercial Road East, up St. Anne Street in the opposite direction taken by Red, who had gone south down Three Colt Street.

He had slept the night in an outhouse in a stable-yard but before it was dawn had risen and made his way by Thomas Street and Bow Common Lane across Limehouse Cut, southeast by Upper North Street by Grove Street, Ricardo Street, Kerry Street and Grundy Street into Poplar, where he had sought out a friend of his, another Scotsman, who kept a fried fish and supper bar near the East India Dock gate.

He had breakfasted in the kitchen on fresh herrings and tea and hot buttered toast and had afterward smoked his pipe and reflected that, perhaps, in spite of the police, life had something to offer a man.

And then he read in the morning paper how a jewel thief had been found dead in a back yard of a house that had been on fire.

In his hand was a ruby and platinum pendant that had been stolen from Lady Crestworth the night before when leaving the theater. The man's name was Coley. Alfred Coley.

MacTavish was startled and a little frightened by the news.

Was the dead jewel thief the man Red had been going to see?

Alf Coley, the friend of that crooked fellow, Joe Deacon. If so, what had become of Red?

MacTavish hoped that he had not gotten into any trouble. He reflected that the sooner he himself was out of London the better. If the policeman he had hit in Limehouse saw him he was lost.

THE Hartigans were aroused soon after dawn by Fred Morrison, Mrs. Hartigan's brother.

At first, having in mind what Fred had said the night before when he had called to see them and made trouble about the pendant, they were reluctant to let him in but he had told them he had something to tell them that might mean prison for all three unless they took —— good care and so they opened the door.

And then, in the back kitchen, he showed them a morning paper, containing the news of Coley's death and the discovery that he was the thief who had stolen the ruby and platinum pendant from Lady Crestworth.

"Now," said Fred Morrison, "who the —— is this feller, Coley?"

Mrs. Hartigan pondered.

"I know," she said. "'E's the feller Red was going to see. 'E must have stolen the pendant from 'im."

"You fool!" said Hartigan. "That's what comes o' you bein' so scared you went an' shoved the —— thing into 'is pocket an' not in mine."

"You needn't talk, Sam," said Fred Morrison. "I ain't forgiven you for pinchin' it from me an' you needn't think it."

Mrs. Hartigan knew by the look in her brother's face that in another minute he would lose his temper and there would be last night's trouble all over again.

"For ——'s sake, you two," she said. "Shut up! What are we goin' to do?"

"Well," said Fred, "you two can do what you like; myself, I'm goin' to take a trip to—well, I'm not goin' to say where. Knowin' what kind of a rat you are, Sam, I'm afraid if you knew you'd split. I'd do you in if you did, o' course, but I'm not goin' to run any risks. I'll look after myself."

With a nod, he left husband and wife glaring at each other in the dim light of the morning across the kitchen table.

"Suppose the police have got that feller, Red, an' he lets on he got the pendant 'ere," said Mr. Hartigan.

"Dunno about you, Sam," said his wife, "but I'm goin' to sling my 'ook. Comin'?"

"Oh, I'm comin', Floss. I wouldn't let you out of my sight now for a fiver."

By nine o'clock the Hartigans were in Chatham, where Mr. Hartigan had a brother who showed no pleasure at seeing them.

WHEN Mrs. Coley read that her husband was dead she was glad. Then, when neighbors called at the house and commiserated, as was considered only decent, she suddenly burst into tears.

Poor Alf had kicked it. She was all alone in the world. A widder. Poor old Alf.

She did not know how Alf came to be dead in the back yard of a house near Waterloo, but in some way or other that young feller, Red, was responsible.

Alf had welted him. He'd followed Alf, probably, and done him in. But it was Joe Deacon who had once made love to her, the beast! When Alf was away at sea, and Alf had come home unexpected and half killed him. It was Joe Deacon who was responsible.

Joe Deacon had sent Red to Alf. Red had meant no harm, she was sure, but Alf had just about finished him off. He would, of course; that was Alf's way. But it was Joe Deacon who was to blame for poor, dear old Alf goin' West before 'is time. All right, then, she'd go and see what that there Joe Deacon had to say about it.

Just as a mere precaution, knowing Joe tolerably well, Mrs. Coley put a knife in her pocket before setting out on her journey to East Ham, where Joe Deacon lived.

Joe Deacon, however, had already read the news. He was quick enough to connect Alf Coley's death with the red-headed young sweep who had kept him from getting the tow-headed Scotsman's money in the pub in West Ferry Road. There was only the one thing to do and that was to leave London at once.

When Mrs. Coley called he and the lady,

who passed as Mrs. Deacon for the time being, were well on their way to Cardiff.

Moss, who had seen Coley's body carried out of the house after the fire had been extinguished, escaped without being questioned by the police. Alf was dead. Farlow's girl had got away with her brother. The game was up.

He crossed the river to Euston and took train to Liverpool.

WHEN Mr. Farlow had left him, Red washed and dressed; and after scribbling a note of thanks to be given to Miss Farlow and refusing breakfast, hurried away from the house in Bruton Street and caught a bus in Oxford Street for Limehouse, running the risk of meeting the conductor who'd hit him the day before.

It took him some time to find where the Hartigans lived and when he at last reached the house a woman told him that Mr. and Mrs. Hartigan had left early that morning without saying a word. The woman winked and looked very mysterious, thereby giving Red to understand that the Hartigans were no better than they ought to be and that she, for one, was not surprized they had gone. Red thanked her and walked off.

As he drew near the shipping office he heard some one calling:

"Red! Red Wilson!"

Turning, he saw MacTavish hurrying toward him, wearing a soft brimmed hat that was much too big for him, and a raincoat, also too big.

"Why, Mac!" he said. "So they didn't get you?"

"Get me?" said MacTavish. He looked uneasily first to the right and then to the left. "Nae, they didna. Red, thon fella, Coley, he's deid!"

"Is he?" said Red, pretending an indifference he was far from feeling.

"Aye. It's in the paper. Did ye meet him?"

"Yes, I met him, Mac, but only for a minute or two. He wasn't the kind of man that I care for, anyway."

"Is it the sam' man, dae ye think?"

"Perhaps."

"Weel," said MacTavish, "ye've ta'en a weight off ma mind. I got it into ma heid ye were in it an', mebbe, the police had ye or ye were hidin' somewhaur in fear o' yer life."

"What are you doing now, Mac?"

"I'm daein' two things; hopin' thon policeman I punchit winna see me—he's aff duty the noo, which is a' to the guid—an' rin me in; an' I'm hopin' when I get to the shippin' office there'll be a ship fur me."

"If you want a ship, Mac, maybe I can get you one. I'm signing on this morning at ten on the *Devon Coast*, lying in East India Dock, and leaving tonight. Like to come with me, if I can fix it?"

"Wud I? Daes a puddick drink beer? Wud I no'."

LATE in the afternoon the mate of the *Devon Coast* leaned over the rail of the bridge deck amidship and watched a man coming along the quayside, carrying his sea-bag over his shoulder.

One of the sailors who had signed on that morning had been knocked down by a motor lorry and taken to the Poplar Hospital and this man, apparently, was his substitute.

The man made his way up the gangway to the after well-deck and stood for a moment, glancing about him uncertainly.

The mate eyed him with disfavor. He wasn't a very presentable specimen, he thought, from any angle, but if he could do his work, who cared? He had a pale, unwholesome face and a pointed nose and swollen eyelids and a scrubby fair mustache. He wore a comparatively new blue suit, tan shoes, white collar and red tie, blatantly red, and a hard black bowler hat. Any one seeing him might have set him down as a respectable clerk, slightly given to drink, perhaps, or a shopkeeper, or an out of work bus conductor, anything, indeed, rather than an able-bodied seaman.

"Here, you," said the mate. "Come here!"

The man nodded and spat and then very slowly climbed the ladder that led to the bridge deck.

"What's your name?" said the mate, fuming.

"Chadwick's me name," said the man rather haughtily. "'Ere's me discharge book."

"Huh!" the mate grunted. The more he saw of this merchant the less he liked him. "Give it here. Now, let me tell you this, Chadwick, I don't know what kind of vessels you've been used to, but"—here he looked at the date of the completion of Chadwick's last voyage and was shocked—"I don't understand; you've not been to sea for two years."

"No, mister, I ain't," whined Chadwick. "I've been ashore, on account of my poor wife's illness. I couldn't leave 'er. They wouldn't take 'er to 'ospital an' I've been lookin' after 'er."

"Oh!" said the mate. "Well, what I was going to say was this: I don't know what kind of vessels you've been used to, but if you spit on these decks again, wood or steel, you're going to get into trouble. And another thing, don't scowl when I speak to you. Understand? Better get that into your head now. I'm not the man to stand any —— nonsense from a deck-hand or any one else when it comes to running the ship. One more thing: When you have occasion to speak to me, which'll be —— seldom, you'll say 'sir.' Understand?"

"Yes, sir," said Chadwick sulkily.

"All right, then, get on for'ard and dump your gear in the forecastle!"

Chadwick hoisted his sea-bag once more and walked off, past the galley and the fiddley and the No. 3 hatch and the saloon deck-house, under the lower bridge, to the ladder that led down to the for'ard well-deck.

And here he paused for a moment, hardly trusting his eyes.

Coming toward him from the direction of the forecastle were two men whom he had little desire to meet again. One was the feller they called Red, the red-headed feller, who'd interfered with him—blast him—and the other was the Scotsman who'd made his nose bleed.

Chadwick descended the ladder and greeted them nervously, with an affectation of geniality.

"Well," he said, "didn't expect to see me aboard, did yer? Well, I'm 'ere, all the same, an' just because o' you, Red, an' that —— silly trick o' yours in buttin' in when you wasn't wanted. Some feller that 'ad been listenin' follered me an' caught up with me where that bus stopped by Lime'ouse Church. A —— lunatic who worked on 'is own an' was chock full o' Russia an' Lenin an' Trotzky an' the Red Flag an lord knows what! 'E said 'e'd found out from what 'e'd 'eard that I wasn't in earnest. A —— lie, anyway, as I told 'im. He wouldn't 'ave it. The blasted maniac. He said if I didn't clear out o' London 'e'd do me in. See! 'E'd foller me an' do me in. Mad like, o' course."

Chadwick was growing worried. This red-headed feller didn't seem pleased to see him.

"You an' me, Red, an' Jock, 'ere, we ought to 'ave a pretty good time this trip. I got it in for that bloody mate already. 'Im an' his talk about running the —— ship. We'll show the stiff, won't we? It's about time some o' them bloody mates was taught they can't do as they like. You an' me, we're as good as 'im, any day o' the week. What are you, Red; sailor or fireman?"

"Neither," said Red, speaking for the first time since he had caught sight of Chadwick. "I'm bosun. Understand that? Bosun." His voice was direct and threatening. Chadwick stiffened. "And don't you call me Red, till I give you leave."

"What the —— are you talkin' about?" said Chadwick. "I'm not goin' to be put upon by you. You needn't think it. I'm as good as any man aboard this ship an' in your 'eart you know it!"

"I don't know anything of the kind," said Red. "I know you're a despicable sweep, if that's any good, who's out to make money by saying things he doesn't believe. You listen to me and pay attention. I don't intend to waste time arguing. I'm bosun and that's enough. You're not as good as any one else aboard this ship and you needn't think it. You're not as good as me to begin with. You'll do your work and keep a civil tongue in your head, or if not, you're going to be sorry you ever set eyes on me. You may be as Red as you like ashore, but aboard this ship you'll remember you're one of the hands and you'll do as you're told."

Red had a strange feeling that what he was saying to Chadwick some one had said to him in almost the same words. And then there flashed into his mind suddenly the memory of the boatswain four and twenty hours before on the forecastle head of the *Cape Spartel*, warning him what would happen on that voyage he had never made. He glanced uneasily at MacTavish.

MacTavish beamed at him and winked.

"Man," he said "dae ye ken thon's the grandest speech that ye've made. I wudna ha'e believit ye had it in ye."

Red turned to Chadwick.

"All right, you. Get along for'ard and don't look at me like that."

After Chadwick had moved away, Red laughed.

"Queer world, Mac, isn't it?"

"Aye," said MacTavish, "it is that."

DONALDS O'ROURK

by Wilkeson O'Connell

Author of "A Point of Honor," "King's Bounty," etc.

WHEN Donald O'Rourk was a young man, he traveled many trails, and lay in many lodges. Then he married Rachel Vorhis, who bore him many children before she died in giving birth to the ninth. The children, also, had died on him, mostly; and now he was an old man striving to disentangle the web of recollection to find something of use to the one son who remained to him. This son, Joshua O'Rourk, a long and weary man of thirty-five, sat on the door-step, watching the slow approach of the Indian summer night with the same patient impatience that he gave to his father's maunderings.

In the darker dusk of the cabin the old man was retelling—inconsequentially, as old men will—the story of how he first went to the land of the Senecas, in the days of his youth. This he told for the information of the slender, buck-skinned hunter whose name was Ferry, and who, as he listened, watched through the cabin door a dramatic sunset that faded over the land that had—and not long since—been the Cayugas'.

That tribe no longer hunted in the valleys of the Iroquois, having retired, with Brant and his Mohawks, to the King's lands in Canada, at the end of the Revolution. Many of the neighboring tribe, the Senecas, had gone with them; but a portion that were under the discreet leadership of certain chieftains, were allowed, by Congress, to remain in their own and their brothers' inheritance until all the unreserved land should be claimed by white settlers. Only this present season had the lake-lined valleys been declared open for settlement; and the next day at dawn a party of pioneers would start to see what among these might be worth the claiming.

"Seventeen, I was," said old Donald, packing his pipe; his eyes fixed on something no one else could see; "and traveling with Jock McPherson, as was wood-runner for Sir William Johnson; and me anxious for a similar post. We set out from Johnstown in late August; and followed the Great Trail till we come in hereabouts. Here we took to canoes, going up the lake till we were past the High Fall. Turned we off then to the left, climbing a bluff to a trail through the woods—which was oak, mainly, and some pine—till we come, keen set, to one of the little castles of the Cayugas. What was it they called it? 'Coriogonal.' Ay, Coriogonal. There we lay that night; and I mightily taken with a slim, brown maid that—

"Well, from there, at morn, we went south by west through a swamp where the frogs were croaking, coming out in a little valley with a waterfall at its head. Lying warm and soft between the hills in the sun, mournful sweet, and half asleep, like, it

seemed; and I, loon mad as I was, told the maid that 'twas there I would be buried. She answered me 'twas Seneca country; and that I'd best speak to them concerning my wishes, they being an obliging people. She was of the Senecas herself; a wise woman and a priestess later, and witty beyond any other I have known—"

He dreamed off into the past, as old men do.

"Ay," he spoke therefrom, "slanting warm and soft to the southern sun. The snuggest valley of them all."

Joshua O'Rourk looked inquiringly at the hunter.

"South by west through a swamp—can we come on it by that, d'ye think?"

"It's not much to go by," said Ferry doubtfully; "were there not some landmark at the mouth of the vale, old gentleman?"

"A landmark?" repeated Donald O'Rourk, a trifle dazed by his lightning swift return from the past. "Nay, not one that ye could depend on as still standing— Ah, but there is, though! Wait, till I light me pipe. How can I recollect aught truly, when me pipe is out?"

The spark showed in the dusk; and old Donald spoke assuredly.

"On the right of the main valley ye'll see that the hill breaks down into a bit of high, ragged, bare cliff—to think I should have forgot it! On the southern edge of this rock, and fairly high up, is painted the sign of the Bear. And not two hundred paces to the west opens my valley—ye'll know the cliff by the sign—and ye're knowing the sign?"

He peered at Ferry; who shook his head.

"Here, then—" And he loosened his hunting shirt to show the clan sign tattooed on his breast.

FERRY looked with augmenting respect at the mark that symbolized membership in one of the great, secret clans of the Iroquois, that, in the days before the Revolution, had bound the Confederacy into what seemed like an unbreakable alliance. Each buck was bound in loyalty to the tribe into which he was born; and likewise to the clan into which, at a certain age, he was ceremoniously inducted. As all the clans were made up of members from all the tribes, it followed that peace within the league was assured; and the warlike propensities of a most warlike people turned wholly against the Algonquins, and more kindred enemies. All of whom wasted their strength by frequently fighting among themselves. As membership in the clan was by election, as well as by birth, occasionally persons outside the Confederacy were, under favor, admitted to the privileges and protection that membership accorded. Old O'Rourk had been one of these; and the younger man recognized the fact and the old man with a changed regard.

"Ye'll be of the clan of the Bear, then, old gentleman?"

"Even so, young hunter," answered Donald O'Rourk.

"'Tis the reason I'm willing to go scouting with you, Ferry," said Josh, "leaving Mary and the boy alone with him in a land that was hostile yesterday."

"And they'll be as safe with me," said his father, "as they'd have been with Sullivan's own command, or in the lodges of the Oneidas."

"Well, each to his own judgment," was the hunter's comment. "But I'd trust no Indian till I'd killed and scalped him with my own hand."

"Ye've never sat at a council, I take it?" said old O'Rourk.

"No, nor wish—nor need—to, now," answered Ferry. "After all, the bond of the clan broke with the Confederacy. Will that sign avail aught in this day?"

"Ay," answered the old man, "and as much as ever. For those who broke the bond are all on the King's lands in Canada, and like to stay there. What bands of Iroquois there be that hunt in these valleys nowadays are Senecas that go under the leadership of Red Feather and the Snake Weaver. And they were two who ever held with the colonists, and opposed the scattering of the Council Fire."

"No friends of Brant's, I know," admitted Ferry.

"And consequent," added Josh, "no foes of ourn—we trust."

"They say the Snake Weaver takes on queerly for an Indian," said Ferry. "Would have his tribe to give up hunting, and clear the lands that Congress granted 'em, and plant more corn than they used, and graze cattle and sheep like the white settlers."

"'Tis not the worst advice in the world," said old O'Rourk; but his tone was a sad one.

"And I've heard tell that he's dead set against the trade in liquor," said Josh. "Calls it the worst enemy of the redskin; and tried to have the sale forbidden on the Reservations—to no purpose, of course."

"Ay," agreed his father, "Sir William held so too."

"For if they didn't get it on the Reservations," argued Josh, "they would off."

"What matter?" asked Ferry. "'Twill soon settle the Indians for us; and then all the valleys of old York will be open for settlement."

"Yes, hunter, I reckon you be right."

The note of melancholy in the old man's voice was deepened.

"It don't sound true Indian to me," said Josh. "Who be this Snake Weaver, Dad? I never heard tell of him till lately."

"Nor I," said his father. "He's a sachem new since my time. And I can recall neither buck nor warrior of that name among the Senecas. But he seems to lead 'em, now—with Red Feather."

"They say he be as crazy as two loons in the spring," said Josh. "Always a-doing of everything different from any one else; and bound to get his will one way, if not by t'other."

"And proud as Lucifer," added Ferry, "boasting that he ain't never been refused a favor. Which may be 'cause he don't go about much to ask such— Look," and he pointed to the door through which the world showed suddenly, darkly silver, "the moon is up. 'Bout time we was starting, isn't it, O'Rourk?"

"Just about," said Josh, getting to his feet. "And here come Mary and the boy from the spring."

He stood aside to let her enter—a tall, gaunt woman, drawn and dried till she was spare and sinewy and strong beyond belief, bitter determination marked about her mouth and contradicted by the resignation in her eyes and on the high, smooth brow. She was followed by a slender, nervously controlled, brown child of thirteen, who carried a dripping bucket. She took in the situation without a comment, and began to gather the supplies the men would be needing on to the table, where they packed them, woodsman fashion, while the boy stood quietly by, ready to help when necessary.

"It may be that we was longer than I thought for," the woman explained in her nasal, dead level utterance. "Young Josh would have it that he saw a redskin looking down from the bank above the spring; and then, of course, he needs must go scouting after."

Joshua O'Rourk stopped short in his packing; and old Donald raised his head to listen.

"Find any trace?" Josh asked of his son.

"There was the mark of a moccasin on a bit of moss," said the boy, "and the fur still rising."

"So?" said Ferry, pausing to look at Josh; who was looking at his father.

"'Twas naught," said Mary hastily.

"But I don't like the sound of it," said her husband. "Was there nary 'nother trace, son?"

"Nary one, Dad," said the boy; and again the three men hung in suspense.

"Nay, I'll warrant there weren't," said Mary, practically, from where she filled a pair of flasks from a cask that stood in a corner. "Nor a mark on the moss, nor a redskin on the bank, neither! 'Tis all childers' fancy, and comes from listening to dad's old tales. Don't ye hold back on 'count of such, Josh, lad."

"What d'ye think, Dad?" asked Josh, turning to the old man.

"We-ell," the latter considered slowly, "there may be more'n a bit of truth in what Mary is holding. 'One swallow does not make a summer, nor a single slot a trail', as the saying goes. Moreover, if the lad should have the right of it, it's no hostile he saw, but some friendly Seneca sneaking through the woods for salt—"

"Salt?" demanded Mary.

"Ay, they're saying the secret wells are hereabouts, though I never saw naught of the sort meself."

THE other men still hesitated; and Mary broke in reassuringly.

"Nay, I'm sure that's the case, now I come to consider. Get on with your packing, lad, and never waste your thought on us. It's six miles to where Slosson and Loder are waiting for ye; and if a cloud should go over the moon, ye'll be barking your shins on every log that lies 'twixt here and their camp."

Unconcernedly, she bustled hither and yon; old Donald's eyes following her absently, in her careful energy.

"Now, look," she said to Josh, "I'm giving ye two flitches, and saving one for

ourselves. That means ye must hustle back to get us some more afore the trails close; for I'm not hankering to go through another winter on coon's grease. Here be the flasks. Will two do ye? What are ye doing with the powder and bullet, man? Pack it all; and I'll run off some more balls tomorrow for dad to go hunting with."

"I'm going to load all the rifles," said Josh, "and leave ye five rounds a gun apiece besides. D'ye think that'll do ye, Dad? Just in case—?"

"Sure, and it will—it will—" nodded the old man; his mind on a slim, brown priestess of the Senecas, wherever his eyes might go.

"'Tis all we can spare," said his son. "Bring the guns here to the table, Joshie."

Young Josh dragged the five long rifles, that were the household's defense, to the table, where his father was dividing the balls. Through a haze of years Donald O'Rourk heard the hunter protesting.

"'Twon't leave us enough to hunt with, nor yet give your family enough to put up any sort of a fight—granting they'll need, or could—both of which I'm doubting."

"And yourn is the true word, George Ferry," said the pioneer's wife. "Better for Josh to hurry on and back with the news of the new homestead, than to be wasting time and lead thataway."

"Well, I'll load the rifles, anyhow," compromised Josh, "for my own peace of mind; but I reckon I will pack the rest. We're like to need it all. But mind you, run those balls the first thing in the morning, Mary."

And he rammed in some wadding; while Ferry commented caustically on the vagaries of married men, as he adjusted his pack with young Josh's assistance. Strapped, the hunter turned to Donald O'Rourk.

"Well, old gentleman, I'll bid ye good-even', and trust to bring ye word of your south-lying valley this day fortnight—lessen we bog in that swamp first."

"No fear of that," said the old man; "the way is clear, quite straight and open, as ye will find, and the ground slanting gentle to the south. The corn will sprout early there."

"Ay, so we're hoping," said Ferry. "Are ye ready, O'Rourk?"

"Nearly, nearly," answered Josh, from where Mary helped him with his pack. "If ye're feared, lass"—turning to put his hands upon her shoulders—"of what ye seen tonight, bid me stay, and I will."

"Nay, nay!" she refused impatiently. "I'm never the woman to hold ye back for a megrim or fancy! If ye be not with the first party, the best lands will be taken up by other settlers, and some one else lay claim to dad's valley."

That settled it. Old O'Rourk gave his son the conventional blessing and farewell, then sat watching as, with restraint, after the manner of his kind, Joshua kissed his wife, without embracing her, and enjoined his son to look after his mother and the hogs, and not to ram the wadding too hard if he should take out the old rifle. The old man had taken leave of his own family just so, scores of times; and it was as if now he looked on a part of that dead life that he had lived, from the eyes of another person. Then the engrossing sense of identity took hold of him; and it was his son who seemed like a familiar stranger.

The other men stepped forth into the Indian summer night, leaving the old man to help Joshie put up three oak bars behind the heavy door. Donald O'Rourk, having poked the brands into a blaze, sat down on his accustomed settle, puffing and staring absently into the flame. The youngster yawned cavernously, spread a pellet in the recess formed by the settle, and rolled up for the night. Mary was stirring about, redding up the litter of household goods scattered by the recent departure.

"He's a good son—my Josh," said the old man, at last.

"And a good husband," said his daughter-in-law.

"He's all I have left," went on O'Rourk, "out of the nine that Rachel bore me."

"That is the way of things," said Mary. "Quick born, and quick gone—the Lord's will be done."

"Ay, the Lord's will," said Donald O'Rourk absently. "But sometimes I'm thinking we be like the maple trees, Mary, one of which will fly ten thousand keys in a spring. Yet, out of all that multitude, but fifty seeds will sprout; and of that fifty, one—and well mayhap not even that—will grow great enough to be tapped for sugar."

"Yes," said the woman who had borne his son five, "we be even so, Dad."

He smoked in silence; his mind empty or adrift; until she came, at last, to a rest on the seat opposite him.

"Did ye ever know the Snake Weaver, Dad?"

"Not that I know, or recall. Why do ye inquire?"

"'Tis said he rules the councils hereabouts; and we are in sore need of salt. Didn't I hear something about secret wells?"

"Very like," said the old man, "but, though I knew a power of their secrets, that was one I never heard. A Cayuga would have concealed it from his clan-brother, if the same weren't of his own tribe; they was that jealous of the wells."

"But the Snake Weaver is a Seneca," objected Mary. "And he don't always hold with their uncivilized ways. He don't act like a redskin at all, sometimes; he's that queer and unexpected."

"'Course he isn't a Cayuga," admitted the old man. "But I wouldn't put much dependence on that. Ye'd best be asking some buck ye meet with friendly, for salt in the bucket; if you're wishful to use the native stuff, 'stead of freighting in from Albany."

"'Twould be wicked waste," considered Mary, "if there are wells around here. But I'd hate to beg so much as a bucket of brine from one of them greasy, painted, blood-thirsty, child-skinning varmints!" she ended bitterly.

"Ye wouldn't be so again' them, if ye'd lived in the lodges like I have," said O'Rourk.

"Maybe not," said Mary; and her mouth was pinched. "But I was one of them who did live through the raid on Cherry Valley—"

"But remember, lass," interrupted her father-in-law, "that 'twas the blue-eyed Iroquois who engineered that deviltry—"

"Eh, and what of that?" cried Mary. "Blue-eyed, or red-skinned, they killed you just as cruel— What—" she gasped—"what was that?"

With bated breaths they waited in the attitudes in which the sound had caught them. Again the call echoed outside the walls.

"Oh!" said Mary, outbreathing in relief, "'tis but a screech-owl—they always give me the creeps!"

"That was no owl," said young Josh, raising himself to his elbow, "was it, Grandad?"

"No," judged O'Rourk; his head cocked as he harkened to the memory. "'Twas too harsh for an owl."

THE youngster scrambled to his feet, and was suggesting—

"The whicker of a coon, belike," when the call came again, but from the opposite side of the clearing.

"Why, I thought it was over yon—" began Mary; and then she whirled, as the haunting trill came, nearly simultaneously, from two other cardinal points.

"Grandad!"

Joshie crept close to the old man, who stood, suddenly tense and hot-eyed, by the table.

"What be it?"

"God! breathed Donald O'Rourk. "Surrounded!"

"Redskins?" whispered Mary and the boy together.

"Yes," said the old man.

"What shall we do?" asked Mary calmly. "What can we do?"

"Little enough," said O'Rourk, with Gaelic fatalism, "but we'll do what we can."

Under excitement the years were sliding from his shoulders.

"Look, lass, could ye handle a rifle, if it were leaned so, upon the loop?"

Mary looked along the barrel, testing its weight against her own strength.

"Ay," she decided, "I reckon so."

"I don't think they'll try this end," said O'Rourk, glancing over her head to where the wheat stubble slept in the moonlight. "The woods yon are so distant that they'll think twice afore they risk being picked off in the mid of run. Thank God we made no loop on the chimney side! They'd be using it now against us. Sure," he reflected, "they can not be knowing we've just four rounds—though they must have marked that we be short two men—"

Mary moaned in torture at the thought his words suggested.

"Steady, now!"

He spoke as sternly as if he had six sons in reserve; and she controlled her agony, licking the blood from her lip. He brought a hachet and laid it on a stool by her side.

"Them's two men's lives," he told her. "Make sure ye account for 'em both—Joshie, take t'other new rifle, and the southern loop. And here's the ax—oh, ye've got your tomahawk, I see. Well, I'll keep the ax meself, then."

He carried it, with the two remaining rifles, to the door; leaning one gun against

the wall, convenient to his hand, placing the ax, likewise, across a stool, and standing the other rifle ready to rest on the peep-hole's ledge. Then he went to the hearth and trod out the flames, leaving only an ember or so to glow on the under side of the brand, before returning to adjust the shutter in the door. And all this he did, not shakingly, as an old man does almost all things, but calmly and deliberately, as if through careful habit.

"Dost see aught?" he asked; and the others answered no.

"Now listen close," he ordered. "We have just four balls between us, and every one of 'em must tell! Save your shot till ye can not miss your mark. Joshie, ye must account for one with your tomahawk; and I'll do for at least two with me ax. That'll be eight, and if there are more'n that again' us, may God deliver us from them!"

He ceased speaking; and a silence thick as the darkness oppressed them. Without the loopholes the scene showed luminously colorless, like a wash drawing in silvery shades of taupe. Second lagged on second till a hundred, that seemed like a thousand, had gone. The tensity died from old Donald's attitude; his gaze glazed a little on the peaceful world he watched. His thought eluded him, harking back to another night spent by a loophole; and, if one had addressed the proper question, he would have replied that he and two other lads, one wounded, were holding the cabin against the Lenape. His head bowed twice; then he was jerked suddenly back to the present.

"There is a big buck," Joshie was saying quietly, "with two plumes, creeping through the weeds to the left of the white birch."

"Hold your shot, lad, hold your shot," admonished his grandfather; his own accustomed eye picking out four shadows that slipped, as no shadow should, along the edge of brush on his side of the clearing.

"God above us, Dad!" screamed his daughter-in-law. "There are five redskins coming through the stubble!"

Her rifle slipped on the loophole's edge; and the precious ball was gone before he could halt and steady her. With the report a scalp-prickling, staccato yell was raised outside; and the gray forest vomited Indians under old Donald's calmly despairing eyes. Young Josh's rifle spoke, and, evidently, likewise in vain; for, with a cry of "Missed, by golly!" the boy darted across the cabin, seized his grandfather's second gun, and had again fired at his own loop before O'Rourk had judged it prudent to draw trigger on the chieftain, who seemed to lead the attack. Even so, with all his care, the old man misjudged in the treacherous light; and his ball no more than riffled the warrior's scalp-lock. He dropped the useless rifle and seized on the ax; as his daughter-in-law sank to her knees in the dark behind him, covering her head with apron. Rising and falling, sirenwise, confused commotion surged round the cabin; yells, shouts, poundings, and a curious, small, picking noise, but—O'Rourk noted it mechanically—no return rifle fire.

"Here, Joshie! Here, to me, at the door," he shouted. "Quick! They've no firearms. We'll hold the door against them yet."

Young Josh stumbled headlong across the murk, and took up a position directly opposite his grandfather. The door between them was being shaken by tremendous shocks at short, regular intervals. Obviously, it could not hold much longer. The old man and the boy, with weapons upraised to strike, stood swaying slightly for momentum; and the door crashed away before the butt end of an eight-inch log, letting gray darkness into that which had been pitch black. Even as it did so, Mary screamed as she was dragged to her feet by two Indians.

"Dad! Dad! The fireplace! They've tore out the chimney!"

The man and boy whirled toward the hearth; where, one after another, dark forms were blotting out the moonlight that shone and winked through a breach torn in the clay and willow-withe fireback. And instantly they were seized from behind by those, who having manned the battery-ram, now swarmed through the doorway. The whites struggled handsomely; but the odds were seven to one. They were speedily, and not uncarefully, disarmed and held helpless, while all paused for breath-taking.

A brand that had been kicked out of the hearth with the rest of the fire waxed, waned, caught a bit of dust in flame and threatened the flooring. An Indian stepped out the fire, kicking the other embers on to the stone again; where he presently busied himself in rekindling a blaze. It leaped to show an apparently wrecked cabin. The scant but stubborn furniture had been flung hither and yon in the struggle; and

most of the log lay in the débris of the door on the floor in front of the threshold. Actually there was little damage, save to the door and the chimney. The redskins looked toward the empty frame. They seemed to be waiting.

INTO the light, stepping high over the log, came the chieftain. He was a slightly withered Indian, a season past the prime of life, but lithe and vigorous still. He was taller than most Indians and many white men, and wore full ceremonial dress; but —and O'Rourk realized it with heartbursting relief, and no little wonder—neither he, nor any of the others, were painted for war.

The chief, a sachem, old Donald noted, stood for a moment, as if to see and be seen, and then, passing silently to the cask, laid large and heavy hands upon it. This he deliberately up-ended, and watched the rum that dribbled, for a little, from the bunghole. So, also, with glistening, desirous eyes, watched the other Indians. Then, still gravely and deliberately, he pried off the top, and turned the cask upon its side. There was a deep, voluptuously regretful sigh through the room as twenty pair of small black eyes saw the liquor spill and sink through the cracks of the flooring. Haughtily, sternly, their leader watched them as they eyed the wasting rum.

"Ugh! Good!" he grunted at them.

"Ugh!" Noncommittally they grunted in return.

Mary, gasping, looked to her father-in-law; who, hardly less astonished, regarded the chieftain.

"Must be," he concluded some thought aloud. "Yet—we be prisoners— Harkee, Sachem," he demanded, directly, but uncertainly, "come ye carrying white belts or black?"

For, past events considered, the old man could not determine whether their visitors came in peace or war. The indications pointed in both directions.

"Be you Donald O'Rourk?" asked the sachem; Indian cautious, old Donald thought.

"And if I be?" he asked, not less so.

"The belts are white," answered the sachem.

"And if I be not?" said O'Rourk curiously.

"We go," said the sachem, "as if we had never been, like the snow that falls under a March sun."

He folded his arms and waited in proud patience while old Donald considered the prudent course.

"Give me the belts," he said at last, "for I am Donald O'Rourk."

At his words the small, bronze-strong hands were loosened from all three of the whites; and the twenty-odd Indians withdrew to the walls of the cabin. where they squatted impassively, as if their part were finished.

"Dad! Dad!" breathed Mary, turning from anxiety to anxiety; but the old man silenced her with a gesture.

"Ugh! Good!" repeated the chief.

And he delivered many purely imaginary strings of wampum; which were received in a like fashion; O'Rourk raising each high above his head.

"Dad, ask him—ye must ask him—what he has done with Josh and Ferry!"

"Hush, lass," he commanded, "this be solemn ceremony."

He turned to the sachem.

"White belts bind the settlers and the Council Fire. Why come ye to the house of Donald O'Rourk with owl cry and war whoop? It is not so that belts should be delivered to one who lay as a clan brother in the lodges of winters long dead."

"Ugh!" grunted the warrior, and suddenly became voluble. "I am a Seneca. I am a sachem. I am the Snake Weaver."

O'Rourk nodded, for he had suspected nothing else.

"With owl cry and war whoop I came to this lodge; for I feared that if I knocked on the door the string would be drawn in. I made you my prisoners, lest you close your ears against my words; for it may be that you will not be pleased with what I come to say to you. It may be that you will not yield what I come to ask of you. So it seemed wise to me to come in this way, with a show of strength, that you might see that I am a warrior, and worthy that all men should turn their eyes upon me when I am among enemies. I have made you my prisoners, and now you may be scalped and tortured, as it is our custom in warfare—"

"Dad! Dad!" shuddered Mary; but the old man's look never wavered from the sachem's face.

"But you need not fear." The voice, a deep one for an Indian's, sank a note lower.

"I carried no weapons when I came against this house, nor painted my face, nor did I let my young men paint theirs; for I bore belts of good will to those within. I am a warrior! Many are the scalps that I have taken. But your scalps shall be buried on your heads. Many are the prisoners I have tortured. But you shall die quietly, untroubledly, of old age. I am a warrior. I am a Seneca. I am a sachem. I am your son."

He stopped; and Mary forgot to be frightened.

"Hwa-at?" said Donald O'Rourk, wondering impersonally what he would be hearing next.

"Ugh!" confirmed the Snake Weaver. "I am Donald O'Rourk, sometimes called the Snake Weaver. You are my father. I am your son."

"Dad!" whispered Mary. "Yon's mad!"

"A son? My son? Have I another son, then?" muttered old Donald; his mind fumbling through the past.

"I wished to see you, and greet you in friendship," went on the Snake Weaver. "My mother, the Dog Tooth, kept your name green in her memory, and spoke to me of you. I came to your lodge, and took you by force, but you need not fear, your life shall be spared. I wished you to see that your yellow son was not a dead dog to be despised and forgotten. I am a warrior. I am a Seneca. I am not an Andaste to come begging an old bone of my father. I am an Iroquois, carrying belts, and wearing the horns as I walk to and fro in the Council. We of the Longhouse love our friends and our kindred, and treat them with kindness. You have been friendly with Indians. They are your friends. Ugh! I respect you, my father."

And he bent in proud humility to sweep his finger tips across the insteps of old Donald's moccasins.

Mary's voice broke sharp as the yap of a fox in the forest. For the white women of that day had little charity, with more or less reason, for the red ones.

"Dad! Ye be not listening to yon!"

"Why, lass," the old man answered, slowly reflective, "beyond all doubt he has white blood in his veins; and if his mother said 'twas mine have I any reason to deny it? Look at his hands, big and strong to strike a man, or wield an ax—no true redskin has hands like 'em! And the breadth of his shoulders, and the depth of his chest—I had as good in my time, and faith, they be the foundations of a man. And see how his hair is growing in a little curl about the temple; just so is mine, and even so is Josh's—"

"Dad!" wailed Mary, as the old man walked round and round the quaintly embarrassed chieftain, rubbing his own knuckles in pleased achievement.

"Did ye note, Mary," he went on, oblivious to aught save his point, "how, when he spoke to the bucks concerning the rum, his chin was thrust? That's no Indian trait neither, but straight from Derry. Already young Josh's jaw begins to do the same; and sure 'tis the mark of a fighter. But his eyes are his mother's; and hers could see farther than most—this world and another. And the bold hawk's beak on him is coming from the Longhouse, too. 'Tis a better than I could have passed to him. Sure, and he's drawn the best from each of us to make him a man and a leader of men. Deny him? I—who have but one son left me? Not me. Faith, 'tis a one the King of Spain might take pride in claiming!"

"And I suppose ye'll acknowledge the whole of the Six Nations, if they come traipsing through the woods with some crazy tale!" said his son's wife bitterly. "And you that have been a married man too, with a wife that bore you nine afore you laid her away!"

"Nay!" said O'Rourk quickly. "There was no wrong to Rachel. 'Twas all long afore I saw her first. And I and the maid were married too—as marriages go in the Longhouse."

"Ay, I know how they go," said Mary; "and ye call it marriage!"

SUDDENLY the old man dropped his head in his hands. Reality was slipping from him into the mists of uncertain memory.

"'Tis all mixed like," he mused. "Were Rachel's husband the same as the lad who wintered with Senecas and the Cayugas? Was either the man who scouted for Schuyler? And was he the old fool who turned his back on the door, to be seized from behind, not an hour since? Sure, and that was a boy's trick—Scout O'Rourk would never had been caught thataway! Then who be I? Be I—be I—be I—me?"

He thrust out a hand, and stood swaying blindly in the riddle of identity.

"Lawk!" breathed Mary, in awe. "He's crazed too!"

The Snake Weaver drew the hand down, with a curious, almost a reverent, gentleness.

"We of the Longhouse," he repeated, "love our friends and our kindred. If you will follow the fortunes of your yellow son, and live with our people, I will cherish your old age with plenty of venison; and you shall rest at ease in my lodge."

"Eh?" Old Donald was dazed.

"Dad!" blazed Mary. "How can ye harken to such—and Josh, maybe, lying scalped and killed not a stone's throw from the door!"

"No! My white brother," and the Snake Weaver dwelt on the conventional term till it was meaning more than usual, "my white brother is half-way to the lake by this time."

"Ye see," said O'Rourk to Mary. "They wear no war paint. Where is me pipe? How can I consider aught without me pipe?"

"Consider!" cried Mary; while the sachem bent for the pipe he saw under the overturned table. "And what may there be to consider?"

"The life in the lodges," said O'Rourk. "The brave life I led in the lodges—when I was young."

"And who would hunt for us, if ye are so wild as to go?" demanded Mary. "Can Joshie lift a log, or chop it up for the fire, by his lone? If other redskins come sneaking in am I the one to pow-wow, and smoke with 'em, and offer 'em belts and tokens? Will ye leave your own flesh and blood to freeze and starve and be scalped at the last, to loll in a dirty Indian lodge?"

"Wait," said old Donald, "me—me pipe is out."

He groped for a brand on the hearth, lighted the new-packed pipe, and sat for a while puffing. Joshie watched the chief in fascinated admiration. At last O'Rourk knocked the ashes from the bowl, and spoke.

"Harkee, Donald O'Rourk," he said to the Snake Weaver; who straightened with the appellation. "That you are my son I well believe, the more as I have lost many sons as tall and straight and as strong as you be. Ay, in all fatherhood I hold for my son; and as such you shall be addressed and acknowledged—for that, I see, is what you are after. And with justice, I am believing."

He paused, nodding. Then he sighed.

"But I can not live in your lodge. There is a trail for each man which he may travel but once. In my youth my trail led to the Longhouse; now I am old I can not go that way again. I must walk with my white children till the end of the trail is reached. But till then and after I charge you to live in peace and friendship with your white brother; and my blessing shall descend alike on you both. Is it so?"

"My father is free," said the Snake Weaver, "to go or to stay. If it is your desire to live in the new fields, I will send one of my trusty young men to guide you where you wish to go. Is—is there nothing else that you may bless me for?"

"Salt, Dad," said Mary, relieved, calm, and practical.

"We are in sore need of salt to keep meat for the winter," said O'Rourk.

The Snake Weaver spoke in the western tongue to a buck, who arose from the floor at his words.

"Go, then, the squaw and the boy," ordered the sachem. "This young man will show you the little well tonight. It lies not a rifle shot from this place. Ugh! There is nothing to fear!"

Then the Snake Weaver approached gravely to raise his father's hand above his own head.

"I will visit this house again," he said, and, stepping over the log, was gone.

One by one after him the Indians filed out; each pausing to shake the old man's hand and grunt ceremoniously in passing.

ALONE, O'Rourk righted, with some difficulty, his accustomed settle, and sat himself wearily down.

"Eh—me pipe is out again!" he complained petulantly. Stooping stiffly, he secured a flame from the hearth. For a while he sat outbreathing blue clouds in silence. Then suddenly he sighed.

"Ay, I'm old," he muttered. "That's it—I'm old! Fit for naught now, save to pot pigeons and chop firewood for the women and childer. The trail comes to an end. All trails come to an end—some kind—of an—end—"

His head dropped back, and he sank into the easy sleep of old age; the pipe glowing between his fingers.

RENEGADE - RESURGAM

by L. Patrick Greene

Author of "The Little Thing," "The Flame," etc.

THE attitude of the Herveys toward their portrait gallery is somewhat typical of the English—of the Anglo-Saxon race. Although it contains, as it were, an inner history of a people; although it is, in part, an explanation of the growth and solidarity of a wide-flung empire, none but members of the family has entered the room where the portraits hang—and they only enter when a Hervey enters the service and again when he leaves it, or dies.

The Herveys, when they speak of the gallery at all, call it the Chamber of Horrors and have disrespectful, slangy nicknames for their stern-visaged, hook-nosed ancestors whose portraits line the walls; they attribute unspeakable crimes—of slave-running, debauchery and graft—to their forebears. Yet it is a matter of national record that a Hervey was a pioneer in the movement which finally put an end to slavery in Africa, and other Herveys have labored for the welfare of savage races the wide world over. Almost the only criticism that has been leveled at the Herveys—and it applies to the first of the line as well as the last—is that they are too cold-blooded, too Puritanical, to be human. And as for graft, the Herveys have always had to pinch and scrape that they might exist on the pensions awarded them by a grateful—theoretically speaking—government.

The Herveys are inclined to be silently apologetic in the presences of people who have relatives in the navy or army. To them the life of a civil servant seems trite and inglorious before the pageantry of war: The title, "native commissioner," could not be mentioned in the same breath as that of "major," "commander" or even "lieutenant."

And yet—

JOHN HERVEY was twenty-two when, the day before he sailed for South Africa, he entered the gallery for the second time. The first time was on the occasion of his uncle's death—the victim of a poisoned arrow in a New Guinea jungle. Then—he was only twelve—he had been a passive, wondering observer. Now he was to be an active, eager participant in a ceremony which was almost Latin in its show of sentiment.

He looked at the portraits—a laurel wreath hung above each one—of dead and gone Herveys; looked at the portraits of other living Herveys stationed at distant outposts of the Empire. He shivered slightly. They seemed to be regarding him sternly, measuring his worth, challenging

him to equal their record of service, threatening him with things unnamable should he fail to live up to the Hervey traditions.

He looked for relief at the large, massively framed portrait of himself he held in his hands, mentally comparing it with those hanging on the wall. He had the same hooked nose, the same wide spaced eyes as they had. But his mouth was different, seemed effeminate by contrast, and his ears were small, set close to his well-shaped head, not large and outstanding like those others.

Pushing his way through a horde of relatives, ignoring the admiring, possessive looks of his mother and sisters, deaf to the heavy, labored chaff of the men, he sauntered over to a dark corner where a portrait hung with its face to the wall. It had no laurel wreath—only a strip of broad, black crêpe paper pasted diagonally across it.

At the top was written:

"Frank. Born a Hervey, May 1, 1870; appointed Assistant Native Commissioner to Basutoland, 1893; resignation requested 1895. At that date went to Rhodesia and prospected for gold. During the rebellion of 1896 he led a party of Matabele warriors to attack a white settler. Died a renegade."

John Hervey turned the portrait over and started in surprize. Except for a neat, well trimmed mustache, it might have been a portrait of himself. It had the hooked nose, of course; ears set exactly the same, a smiling, dare-devilish look in the eyes and the same unruly lock of jet-black hair which persisted, despite years of careful brushing, in curling unHervey-like about his forehead.

John Hervey thoughtfully pulled his upper lip, considered a moment and then replaced his uncle's portrait—its back to the wall—considered a moment longer and hung his own beside it.

"No, not there, John."

He turned slowly at his mother's voice, flushed slightly before the searching scrutiny of the others.

"Why not, Mother?" he asked softly. "It isn't the Hervey custom to condemn on circumstantial evidence alone, and Uncle Frank—"

"Silence, sir!"

An old man, gray-haired, his white, bushy mustache stained with tobacco juice, toothless, but still a Hervey, still bronzed by years of tropical sun, still erect, very stern and unbending, moved stiffly toward him, his face an angry red.

The others made way for him, according him a greater respect than age alone could command. Thousands of square miles were colored red on the maps because Grandfather John Hervey had won the trust of a warlike tribe: Single-handed, armed only with the Hervey traditions, he had gained concessions the representatives of other nations had failed to secure; had actually protected those representatives and their armed forces from being massacred by an outraged people. The Herveys knew and could estimate his accomplishments at their true worth, even if the papers had only announced "that by request of the Paramount Chiefs a Protectorate had been proclaimed over Blank."

The old man walked past his grandson and turned the portrait of Frank Hervey, his youngest son, to the wall again.

Then he returned to the other end of the attic room and waited expectantly before the portrait of the first of the Herveys.

The others gathered silently about him.

He waited a moment, breathing hard, his steely gray eyes smoldering under their bushy cover.

Then he took the portrait from the wall, placed the laurel wreath which hung above it carefully in a basket, and read the record of the first John Hervey to give his life to the administering of the white man's justice to a heathen people. The reading finished, the portrait was replaced and the youngest John Hervey placed a fresh laurel wreath above it.

The old man passed slowly down the line, and the listening Herveys heard the history of their people, the history of an empire's growth; they heard of men who served for serving's sake, of men who helped to make the trails in the earth's far corners as safe to tread as the King's Highway.

In Drake's first American settlement their story began—but it knew no boundaries: Canada and India, Australia and Africa, China and the South Seas—all parts of the world gave testimony to the administrative abilities of the hook-nosed Herveys.

Even as he read, a Hervey, stationed on the Northern Nigerian border, was dying of blackwater fever, unattended save by naked savages, who made the bush hideous with their howling lamentations. And another, somewhere back of the Himalayas, was receiving a deputation of hillmen, which was

the crowning success of his administration.

But the death of the one would not be known for many weeks to come. With the success of the other, even had it been known, this present gathering of the Hervey clan did not concern itself. It was only interested in the dead and gone Herveys—and, of course, in the youngster who sailed for Africa in the morning.

After a long hour Grandfather Hervey came to the portrait which faced the wall. His voice faltered slightly as he read the record inscribed thereon; but there was something terribly magnificent in the stern light which flashed from his gray eyes, in the contemptuous disgust in his voice as he spat out the words—

"Died a renegade."

Passing on to the portrait of his grandson, the old man pasted a piece of parchment on to the frame. On the parchment was written—

"John—born a Hervey, March 26, 1888; appointed to the Rhodesian Native Department, April 4, 1910."

That done, the old John shook the young John's hand and quickly left the room. The other Herveys—brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins and nephews—filed slowly past the new addition to their gallery. They, too, shook hands with young John, wished him, matter-of-factly, good luck; told him not to bathe after sunset; warned him to follow the Hervey treatment of malarial fever; advised him always to keep one bullet in his revolver for himself—

And presently he was alone in the room, alone to keep watch for one hour with the dead and gone Herveys; to read their records; to absorb their traditions; to burn, with all reverence, the old laurel wreaths.

A whimsical smile hovered about his small, sensitive mouth when, his vigil over, he left the room, locked the door and hung the key in its appointed place. He hesitated a moment; his hand reached up as if to take down the key again. Then, confident in the belief that it would be months, maybe years, before the room was entered again, he let his hand fall to his head, brushed back that unruly lock which persisted in curling over his forehead. Then, whistling cheerfully, he descended the stairs and, joining the other Herveys, listened patiently, dutifully, to a heated argument which was being held as to the size of the tip one should give a deck steward—

"AND so you have been to the Kraal of Charms?"

The native, his stupendous fatness in some way adding to the dignity of his appearance, keenly regarded the white man, then quickly looked away, looked at a group of naked little urchins playing in the shade of a palm tree. It was as if he wished to hide the gleam of admiration which flickered in his eyes.

The white man nodded and, sitting down on a crudely made three-legged stool, took off his white pith helmet and with the palm of his hand brushed back a damp, curling lock which hung down over his forehead.

A big bead of sweat rolled down his hooked nose, hung for a moment and, then, chased away by another, dropped to the ground.

"Yes," he said presently, in a matter of fact, quiet voice. "I have been to the Kraal of Charms."

Then he, too, seemed to lose all interest in the conversation and gazed incuriously about the kraal of Headman M'Jambe, casually acknowledging the embarrassed greetings of the young men of the kraal; smiling at the children; frowning, when his eyes rested for a moment on a group of native constables who were imperiously demanding that beer be brought to them. One of them caught his eye and stiffened, whispered hurriedly to his comrades. Instantly their noisy clamor ceased. They demanded no longer but each waited on himself. Yet there was nothing cringing in their attitude, no servile obedience to an autocratic overlord. Rather, it was as if they had been suddenly reminded of a trivial item of deportment, and hastened to observe it.

Beyond the kraal glimmered the waters of Lake Tanganyika; its surface, near the shore, was pitted with tiny fishing craft. A soft wind rustled the palm tops, a whispering obligato to the low drone of insects.

"It is a long trek and a hard one to the Kraal of Charms," M'Jambe said softly.

"Truly!" The white man leaned back against the hut and looked wearily at the headman.

"And you are tired, your eyes are losing themselves in your head. There is very little fat on you and what there is is running away. And—" M'Jambe brushed his hands lightly together—"it is a bad country; all about that kraal death waits. There is

fever and—and other things. It was folly to venture there alone."

"It would have been still greater folly to have gone with the noise of soldiers and camp followers."

M'Jambe chuckled, toyed a moment with the heavy metal bracelets which ringed his muscular arms before saying:

"I did not know that silence kept away evil. My people boast of their strength that their enemies may become aware of their own weakness; my people sing loudly when they pass through dark places and so frighten the spirits away— Did you say that you saw the spirits?"

The white man sighed. Unconsciously, apparently, he fingered one of the rents in his soiled white riding trousers, exposing a blood-stained bandage; a bandage torn from the bottom of his shirt and wrapped tightly about his thigh.

M'Jambe looked at it thoughtfully.

"Did the spirits do that?" he asked sarcastically. "Or perhaps you were crawling through the bush and a thorn scratched you?"

The white man laughed, then his eyes flashed sternly, his lips set in a straight, hard line. His voice grated a little as he said:

"You know that it was not done by spirits—or a thorn, M'Jambe."

"I know what I know," the headman said stolidly. "All else is hidden from me. I am no wizard, no reader of unspoken thoughts. You went to the Kraal of the Charm-makers, although I warned you not to do so. You went alone—although I, myself, offered to guide you or to give you my warriors as escort. But your mind was set. Alone you went and, because you wished it, not one of my people left this kraal between the day of your going and this the day of your return. Because you ordered it, your men have dwelt among us, living as if they owed allegiance to me. Today, when we saw you coming along the trail, they put on the dress of constables—before that they went naked. No one has come to my kraal, no one has left it, the drums have been silent. How then should *I* know what happened to you at the Kraal of Charms? How should I know how you came by that wound there?"

"I did not say that I got the wound at that place, M'Jambe, the white man said softly.

"But you did," the headman insisted.

"Yes, I did. But that is of no consequence; the things which happened are of no consequence. But the things I saw—are of grave import."

M'Jambe moved uneasily; shouted an order to one of his wives and greedily drank from the pot of beer she brought him.

He smacked his lips, wiped his lips with the back of his hand, then said, as if it were a thing of prime interest, as if nothing else were worth considering.

"There is beer—and beer. Now the beer my wives brew—"

"I have not drunk it," the white man said curtly, "and therefore my mind can keep to one thing and not wander along many paths like a man lost in the bush."

"Then unburden your mind so that the two of us may drink," M'Jambe said impatiently. "And first I would know how you came by that." He pointed his finger at the blood-stained bandage.

"A spirit bit me," the white man said and laughed.

"Au-a!" M'Jambe said reproachfully. "I am no child to be put off with foolish tales."

"Say you so? Yet you have believed lies told by the—er—spirits."

"Maybe they were lies; maybe not. My ears are open. Can you tell me the truth?"

"Assuredly. First you must know that I crept very close to this Kraal of Charms; this kraal which, you say, no white man has ever visited; which is tabu among your people because of the horrors reputed to dwell there. It is three days' trek from here—you know it!—over the border, in the country of the Germans. It is well guarded. The—" he smiled—"spirits do not wish to be disturbed. Perhaps they are making charms which will create for you mighty warriors; which will make you all-powerful."

"It may be," M'Jambe muttered.

The white man put his forefinger scepticaly along his hook nose.

"But I have seen the charm-makings and therefore they will come to nothing."

"It may be," M'Jambe said again. He looked sorrowfully, pityingly at the white man, who continued with an easy air of assurance—

"It is as sure as the rising of the morrow's sun," M'Jambe."

"Not until I have seen tomorrow's sun will I say it has risen," M'Jambe said sententiously.

"You doubt, then, the strength of my charms over the charms of those others?"

M'Jambe waved his hands deprecatingly.

"Not altogether that, white man. But—" he hesitated a moment, seeking to find words that would obscure the point he wished to make—"but should I die in the night, the morning's sun will not warm my bones."

"Meaning that the help I will summon will arrive too late?"

"Meaning—" M'Jambe drained his pot of beer, then threw it at a half-starved cur of a dog; laughed as it ran yelping away—"meaning that I would like to hear the story of the wound in your thigh."

THE white man thoughtfully pulled at his upper lip.

"It is soon told, M'Jambe," he said slowly. "A spirit—a warrior," he amended with a chuckle as the headman moved impatiently, "stumbled over me as I crouched hidden near to the Kraal of Charms. We fought a little—in silence, for my hand was over his mouth, closing it so that he could not give the alarm. For fear of calling others to his assistance, I dared not shoot him. He tried to run his spear through my belly, but his aim was poor and he pierced my thigh instead. Then I turned his own spear upon him and, and he died—noisily; so noisily that others came running, white men and black. I rose to my feet and ran, dodging among the bush, they after me, firing and yelling as they ran. Coming to the river—you know it?—I hid among the reeds, close to the shore; and the water thereabouts was tinged with the red blood of my wound. Until darkness came they searched for me and, when they returned to the kraal, I followed closely behind them so that I saw much that previously had been hidden. That is all."

"It is a lot, white man. And what did you see?"

"It is a large kraal, M'Jambe. I could not count all the warriors, white and black, gathered there; neither could I give the full tally of the guns, big and little, that are ready to talk of death when those white men order; or of the iron devil things which travel on shining rails and vomit fire and smoke. But—I saw enough."

"Yes, you saw enough," M'Jambe agreed gravely. "And now what?"

"And now I want to know," the white man said slowly, "why you have not reported this matter to the administrator? Why have you dealt in play talk about a kraal where the spirits are living and so hide its real mission?"

"And what is that?" M'Jambe stooped over, grunting because of his fatness, and searched the sole of his foot in order to extract an imaginary thorn.

"Tchat! When warriors are called together the meaning is not peace. And if those who now dwell at the Kraal of Charms struck swiftly, without warning—having prepared for years for that purpose—they would overrun the land between here and the Thunder of Water* before they could be checked."

"If then," M'Jambe said. "Well, what of it?"

The white man disregarded the question, countered it with another.

"And knowing all this; knowing, perhaps, more, M'Jambe kept silent? Why?"

"When two lions fight over the kill a wise man leaves them alone."

"Or waits to see which one will win and then turns to help that one so that some small scraps of offal will come his way as a reward," the white man said sarcastically. "But that is the part of a hyena, not of a man."

M'Jambe was silent, but the white man, watching him closely, saw that his shot had gone home and was relieved to find that it had awakened in M'Jambe a feeling of shame, not of angry resentment or—worse—of sneering indifference.

The headman's thick lips moved; he blinked thoughtfully.

"What could I do? What can I do? The white lords over there—" he nodded toward the east—"are all-powerful. I can do nothing; you can do nothing."

"It is too late for you to do anything now, M'Jambe. But—"

"You are long-winded. 'If,' you say; and 'but'— Speak loudly. What is on your mind?"

"I want your word that 'if' and when the day comes, you and your people will not fight on the side of those others."

"Why come to me with such a request?" M'Jambe interrupted roughly. "Go to the paramount chief."

"I have come to the paramount chief."

"Bah! Have you forgotten? Why speak

*Victoria Falls.

folly? The government," he spat contemptuously, "deposed me and set another in my place because I protected one of my warriors from punishment."

The white man chuckled softly. He had heard the story of the manner in which M'Jambe had protected his warrior—by abducting the native commissioner and holding him as hostage for the warrior's safe return. The native commissioner, peeved at this indignity offered his person, persuaded the Powers That Be to depose M'Jambe. His later resignation—he had come to the conclusion that administering justice to his black brothers was not his strong point; arriving at that conclusion on the same day that he received a threatening message from the man he had caused to be deposed—had paved the way for John Hervey's appointment to the district.

"I had not forgotten," the white man said softly. "But a lion, though one calls it a jackal, remains a lion; though one dresses a dog in a lion's skin it can not roar, and not many fear the sound of its voice. And so, as I have said, I am now in the presence of the paramount chief and ask him to pass his word that—"

"You are very wise," M'Jambe interrupted again, "and yet young; you are only a boy; your face is smooth, if one excepts the little hair on your upper lip, and were you of my people you would not be entitled to call yourself a warrior; you have been only a little while in this country, only six moons in my district, and yet you know my people as I know them, you speak our language as if you got it with your mother's milk. I have known many white men, but only one or two who have an understanding heart, who can see eye to eye with us black ones; not one as wise as you. Why is that? Where do you get your wisdom?"

The white man cleverly concealed his impatience: He knew too well that any attempt to force an issue at this point would antagonize M'Jambe.

"It is nothing to my credit, M'Jambe," he said simply. "Among you are some men who can follow the spoor of game as easily as they follow the well-trodden path which leads to your kraal, while others are as blind men in the bush. To some men it is easy to lie; others can detect a lie before it is spoken. Some men are skilled workers in iron, as were their fathers before them, while others look on in awe, thinking their skill a form of witchcraft. As a man's born, so he is. And because the men of my family have always followed the path I now attempt to tread, it may be that some of their spirit is with me."

M'Jambe nodded understandingly.

"If the man who was here before you had been of your wisdom things would not have come to this pass."

"To what pass have they come, M'Jambe?"

The headman shrugged his shoulders.

"If a man has a dog and neglects it, fails to feed it, kicks and beats it, how long will that man command the obedience of that dog? Not long, I say, if another man gives it all the attention, all the food that a good dog deserves. Truly. At the word of its new master it will turn and rend the old. And are there any that will blame the dog?"

"None, M'Jambe. But here's a riddle for your riddle: Suppose that a man, having occasion to go a long journey, left his favorite dog in the care of a friend. Now that friend—through ignorance, it may be; undoubtedly through ignorance—ill-treated the dog; starved it, thinking to cure it of distemper; beat it in order to correct supposed faults. Seeing this, an enemy of the dog's master, planning to work him an injury, yet having no love for the dog, fed and petted it until at last it followed its master's enemy. Anon the owner of the dog returns. What then? Truly the dog will remember the voice of its master and will return joyfully to his hut. Is that not so?"

"It may be. But if the dog has been taken away to another village by the enemy, it will not hear its master's voice. Or, if it is chained, though it hear the voice, it can not obey. In that case, I say, the dog's master has returned too late."

"Not so, M'Jambe. The dog would turn on its master's enemy."

"And so would die," M'Jambe said grimly. "But I am no dog—and I do not desire to die."

For a time neither man spoke; the white man whistling softly, the headman looking uneasily at him.

JEERING shouts and the mocking laughter of children caused them both to look up suddenly. They saw a man, a wreck of a man, clad in unspeakably filthy rags, his head bent forward, shuffle across the little clearing at the far end of the kraal.

The women of the place screamed obscene insults at him; the naked little picanins pelted him with filth.

He turned as if to come up to the place where M'Jambe and the white man were sitting. Then, starting as if with alarm, he pulled the brim of his hat—it had no crown—down over his eyes, turned and shuffled quickly away.

The white man, his face set stern, a cold, contemptuous look in his eyes, rose to his feet, half inclined to follow the miserable intruder. Sighing, he sat down again. He had far more important things to consider than the welfare of a white man who had forgotten he was white.

"That," said M'Jambe," is a man of your race."

"So?"

"Truly. He is the only man of your race known to many of my people. It would go hard with you if they judged all by that one."

The white man nodded.

"True. But they know that not all the bulls in the herd are black. Where dwells that one? Here at the kraal?"

"Nay. He is a strange man. Sometimes I think him mad and for that reason I forget the filth he is and give orders that he be supplied with the food he comes here to beg. He lives in a hut two days' trek from here. It is strange that you did not see it as you journeyed here."

"It would have meant nothing to me even if I had seen it. But in what way is he mad?"

M'Jambe shrugged his shoulders.

"At times he acts as if he were a great white man, as one accustomed to being in authority. Aye. Even to me he has said, 'Do this,' or 'Do that,' and I have obeyed him. But mostly he is as you saw him today."

The white man rose to his feet again.

M'Jambe looked up at him, a mocking light in his eyes.

"Are you going to seek out the white man who has forgotten he is white?"

The other shrugged his shoulders disdainfully.

"No. He is nothing to me. But I am dirty. I go to wash. In the morning I trek—if it is permitted."

"And why should it not be permitted?"

"I thought, maybe, that the dog, having listened to other voices, might be set as watch over me. Knowing what I know, the men over yonder will do everything in their power to stop me from carrying word to the administrator of the forces hiding at the Kraal of Charms. And you, being their dog—"

"Listen, white man," M'Jambe said fiercely. "I am no man's dog. I have listened a great deal to the promises of the chief of the forces at the Kraal of Charms and much that they say seems very wise to me. They are all powerful; they have been preparing while your people have slept. Tomorrow, if they wished, they could put to waste all my land and take my people into slavery—"

"They would swiftly be held to an accounting," the white man interposed.

"Small comfort to me and my people," M'Jambe said grimly. "What good the warmth of the sun to those who are dead? But this I will tell you: Not yet have I definitely cast in my lot with those others, but they press me hard; the time is short and soon they will force a choice upon me; to be with them or against them. There will be no other choice. Nevertheless, this I will venture because of my regard for you: Get you gone and tell those whose business it is to know, what you have seen at the Kraal of Charms. If then a sufficient force is sent to support me before a choice is forced upon me, I will throw in my lot with you. More than that, for my people's sake, I can not promise."

The white man nodded gravely.

"It is fair," he said.

"Also," continued M'Jambe, "that my name may be kept clear with those others and no issue be thrust upon me, your men shall remain here."

"I can travel faster alone. But they shall be unharmed?"

"As to that, if they will only play that they have deserted you, I will pledge my word."

"That will be easy—"

M'Jambe held up his hand.

"This further," he said, "also to protect my name: As soon as it is known to me that you have left my kraal I shall send word to those others by drum talk."

The white man frowned. Suddenly his face cleared and he smiled confidently as he ran his fingers through that stray lock of hair which persisted in falling down over his forehead. Unless the unforeseen happened

he would have three days' start! That was more than sufficient, he thought. And he could not blame M'Jambe for so flagrantly running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. As it was, the headman was risking a great deal.

"It is good, M'Jambe," he said. "I go to make ready now. Before the sun sets I will come to you again to say farewell."

He turned and walked swiftly away, limping slightly because of the wound in his thigh.

THE sun had set, the night shadows were darkening rapidly when the white man presented himself again to the man M'Jambe, the man who was nominally only the headman of a small kraal; actually the autocratic overlord of an immense district.

He had bathed and shaved; one of the native constables had washed, pressed and mended his khaki uniform; his brown shoes and leggings were highly polished; his white pith helmet had been freshly blanco'd. He carried a rifle at the trail; his revolver was in a holster hung from his Sam Browne belt. Except for his arms and ammunition he carried no provisions; he planned to eat off the country—wild fruit, succulent roots and such game as he could trap or shoot.

In all respects he looked like a worthy representative of a great government, master of himself and of the situation in which he found himself.

There was nothing about him to suggest that he was about to start on a long, hazardous trek with the knowledge that he could look for no assistance from any native kraal on the way; knowing that in three days, maybe sooner, white men of another race would be hard on his trail, anxious to capture him, to kill him, that their secret might remain a secret. And, even granting him three days' start, it would be over another week before he could hope to reach the security of the nearest outpost of the Northern Rhodesian Force. A week in which anything might happen to lose him that three days' start. Anything such as a flooded river, an attack of fever, any one of the many perils of the bush.

"I go now, M'Jambe," he said.

The headman slapped his fat thighs and scowled fiercely.

"You are a fool," he said.

"Yes?"

"Yes. I did not expect to see you again. I expected you to start your journey without further delay, and in the morning, having found you gone, I would have talked to those others on the signal drum."

"I said I would come to see you again before I departed. Would you have me a breaker of promises?"

"And I said that I would drum out the signal as soon as I knew of your departure. Now I know you are going and the drums will talk. I, too, am no breaker of promises and my word once given can not be recalled."

"It is just," said the white man. "Remain in peace, M'Jambe."

He turned and sauntered slowly away.

"May your path be smooth," M'Jambe shouted after him and his eyes filled with admiration. He would remember and his people would remember, when all else was forgotten, the appearance of the white man as he set out on his long trek. With a native, last impressions are infinitely more important than first ones.

When the white man reached the edge of the clearing which marked the farthest confines of the village and turned into the narrow path which wound its way through the thick jungle-grass, the signal drum at M'Jambe's kraal began to roar out its message.

At the sound of it the white man broke into a panic-stricken run until, remembering that the men for whom the message was meant lived three days' trek away, he came to a halt, grinned shamefacedly and then went on again at a fast walk until the total darkness of jungle night forced him to halt again and wait for the rising of the moon.

M'Jambe's drum rumbled unceasingly through the darkness until, presently, another drum with a shriller voice answered it.

Its note aroused the white man from the light sleep into which he had fallen; its message brought him to his feet and sent him hurrying through the darkness.

The unforeseen had happened and he cursed himself for not having entertained thought of its possibility. A party from the Kraal of Charms, searching for him undoubtedly, were at a kraal just beyond the border opposite M'Jambe's. They were a bare four hours' trek away!

He ran swiftly through the darkness until, catching his foot in a tangle of creepers, he fell headlong. When he rose, greatly

shaken, realizing that haste meant slow speed, he went on at a more sober gait, considering ways and means of throwing the pursuers off his trail.

When the moon rose he carefully backtracked a hundred feet or more. Coming to a low-hanging branch which jutted over the path, he swung himself up into it and made his way from tree to tree, finally coming down to the ground some distance from the path. Then on he went again, forging his way through the tangle of bush, hoping that his ruse would puzzle and delay the hunters; fearing that he had acted foolishly, that his stratagem would count against instead of for him.

IT WAS approaching noon of the second day after his departure from the kraal of M'Jambe.

The heat was intense; overhead clouds were gathering swiftly, dropping lower, turning from fleecy white to gray, from gray to inky black. In the distance thunder rumbled complainingly. The earth seemed to gasp for breath.

The white man stumbled painfully through the thick undergrowth; plodded on though every muscle of his body cried for rest. His mouth gaped open; his tongue protruded through dried and cracked lips—

He wanted to stop, to lie down and sleep. But in his ears sounded the footsteps of the men who followed him; he heard their deep guttural voices.

He had heard nothing but that since the drum talk at M'Jambe's kraal. They had got on to his trail quicker than he had thought possible and he could not shake them.

The ruse which he had hoped to throw them off his trail had not checked them, had only served to lessen his speed; the continual effort of forcing his way through the jungle growth had sapped his strength. He would have been better off had he kept to the path.

As it was, they had succeeded in getting ahead of him. Once he had nearly walked into the trap they had set for him by a water-hole. He had not dared to approach one since.

The grasses moved to the right of him, but there was no wind blowing. They moved again. His grip tightened on his rifle barrel; he would use the weapon as a club; a shot now, with the bush all about him full of his enemies, would bring them all upon him, and that meant the end.

A native wearing a strange uniform suddenly rose up from the long grass, leveled a rifle at him, grinned triumphantly—commanded him to halt.

With a sobbing curse the man threw his rifle in the native's face and dived forward, collaring the man below the knees; bringing him to the ground.

They wrestled savagely, rolling over and over. The white man was underneath, the native's hands were about his throat, choking him. The pressure increased—

A shot sounded.

The white man wondered why the native went so suddenly limp, silent, lifeless.

He tried to rise to his feet. Lights flashed before his eyes, then went out, and he wandered for eons in impenetrable darkness.

When consciousness came to him again he found himself lying on a bed of reeds in a small hut.

He wondered vaguely at the clean orderliness of the place; wondered that he should be in a hut at all, unbound, cared for.

He sat up, endeavored to rise to his feet, then fell back with a groan.

Physical surrender having been forced upon him, he found that recovery was hard; having stopped, he could not go on.

"Here—drink this."

The voice seemed to have come from a great distance. Some one raised him up, supported him from behind.

He drank automatically from a cup held to his lips.

It was a strong, nauseating liquid; presently the sickness passed and strength flowed back into his veins. He was suddenly aware that he was very hungry—all other sensations palled before that.

Slowly opening his eyes, he looked into the face of the man who was supporting him; that face seemed strangely familiar, almost as familiar as his own. It looked as, he felt, his must look. Wide-spaced gray eyes sunken deep into their sockets; cheeks and chin covered by a sandy stubble of beard; small, almost effeminate-shaped mouth gaping a little from weariness.

"I'm all right now," he said feebly and moved away from the other's supporting arm.

He rubbed his eyes and then looked again at the other; saw, with a feeling of intense disgust, that it was the white kaffir, the

man he had seen at M'Jambe's kraal.

Almost immediately the feeling of disgust passed; amazement took its place, giving way to slow recognition.

He pulled thoughtfully at his upper lip.

The other laughed and with an impatient gesture brushed back the curling lock of hair which hung down over his forehead.

Recognition came like a flash to John Hervey then.

"Thanks for the drink, and all that, Uncle Frank," he said.

The other Hervey, labeled renegade, reported dead, living as white outcasts live in black man's Africa, chuckled.

"And which one of the hook-nosed Herveys are you?" he asked.

"Dad's your brother. I— But never mind about that now. Give me food, water. I must be on my way before it's too late."

He rose unsteadily to his feet.

"Steady, boy."

The older man pushed his nephew down into a rickety chair, pulled a table up to it; brought him food, water; questioned him as he ate.

"You've discovered something over the border, eh?"

"Yes."

"Suspicions or proof?"

"I saw everything. The Kraal of Charms is the railway head. They've got an enormous garrison there—whites and blacks. I saw Maxim guns and field-pieces, stores—I've got a full record and plan of the place here"—he tapped his head—"and it can only mean one thing."

Frank Hervey nodded.

"You've done well, youngster. I've suspected all that but I've never succeeded in getting within five miles of the place. And the old women at headquarters won't act on suspicions for fear of offending a 'friendly power'! Well?"

"M'Jambe's afraid of them. He daren't come out openly against them—good reason, too, when you come to think of it—and he's not ready to go in with them yet. So he let me get away and at the same time warned them that I knew everything. I thought I'd have three days' start. Instead of which they're right on my heels."

He rose to his feet.

"I feel better now—first food I've had for two days. Maybe I can dodge them now. Thanks for the grub, Uncle Frank. Funny seeing you like this. Shall I tell the folks—"

"Tell 'em anything you please but—" his voice became sharp, commanding—"don't go like that, you fool, or you won't live to tell the Herveys anything and they won't know whether to hang a laurel wreath above your portrait or paste a black band across it. Listen!"

HE GRIPPED his nephew firmly by the forearm.

Shouts sounded in the jungle all about the hut—shouts and an occasional shot.

"They've found the dead native—yes, I shot him—and they're beating the jungle for you, converging on this hut."

"Maybe I can get through their lines—"

"Don't be a —— fool. Take off your clothes."

John Hervey obeyed unhesitatingly. It's the custom of the Herveys to render implicit obedience to their elders.

While he was undressing, the older man trimmed his hair, mustache and beard a little and put on the clothes his nephew discarded.

"Put those on," he said, pointing to his own filthy rags.

Again the younger Hervey obeyed. His spirits began to rise as a tiny glimmer of understanding of his uncle's plan came to him.

"We're very much alike," Frank Hervey said. Dressed in the uniform he looked very much younger, looked as his nephew had looked.

And John Hervey, clad in tattered, dirty rags, was the white kaffir—except that he stood erect and his eyes sparkled.

His uncle looked at him critically.

"Good job we both have a hooked beak. Pity your hair isn't longer, but it'll do. They'll see what we want them to see. It's funny! You have the same undisciplined lock of hair as I have." He laughed. "And you pull your upper lip, and your ears and mouth are small. Ah, well! We're Herveys just the same, only we have a little more imagination than the rest."

John Hervey moved impatiently.

"We haven't any time to waste," he said.

John Hervey peered through a crack in the door. No one was in sight, but the shouting sounded nearer.

"It's not time to do anything yet, youngster. You think you can play the part of a

white kaffir? It's a rotten part. Natives spit on you, but that's not so bad as having white men spit on you. You must show no resentment if they do. But it's hard—— hard. Here, smear this grease in your hair and on your face. Good. Now rub this dirt in. Understand, now, you're the man I was. You're a renegade; you've almost forgotten your own language. When you leave here, you'll leave quickly—I'll see to that. If they stop you—I don't think they will; they know that I stand in well with M'Jambe and they don't want to offend him yet. M'Jambe thinks I'm mad, but I saved his life once, so he takes care of me. What was I saying? Oh, yes. If they stop you, tell 'em in the vernacular that you're going to ask M'Jambe's protection because a white man beat you. See?"

John Hervey nodded.

"I'm afraid I'll give the game away if I have to go barefoot—sure to limp—"

The other nodded assent.

"Glad you thought of that. Here, wear these." He took a pair of native-made sandals from a nail in the center pole and gave them to his nephew. "But, my ——, your feet are too clean."

He poured water on the floor, scraped dirt into it. John Hervey paddled in the muddy puddle; daubed mud on his bare arms and legs.

"You'll do now," said Frank Hervey. "Pull your hair down over your eyes; shuffle, don't walk—the sandals will help you there; and keep your head bent; your spirit's broken—you can't look a man in the eyes. I always found that hard. Of course it's easier to lie that way—and it's easier to be lied to."

He looked out again through the chink in the door and saw men advancing through the bush toward the hut.

"It'll be time to go in a moment or two. When you get through the lines, hide up somewhere. I'll keep 'em busy here for a time and when they're through with me they won't bother about you at all. They'll have gained their objective. It'll rain like —— pretty soon, that'll hide your tracks. Not that that matters. You'll be able to make your way down country without any trouble. Stop at all the kraals you wish. They know me, and if you keep your mouth shut—don't talk too much—they'll never suspect anything." He kept his eyes glued to the chink in the door.

"Don't talk now, either. I'll do all the talking. I've talked so much to myself—had to. For a Hervey, I'm —— talkative.

"Tell me: Did you use to fold your ears over and tie 'em with string when you went to bed—so as to make 'em stick out the Hervey way? You did? Oh, that's rich. And I bet you used to try to stretch your mouth as well! But it didn't come off, did it? And they used to say you weren't a true Hervey, didn't they? But you are. It isn't the outward appearances, is it?"

He turned, straightened himself. His eyes sparkled.

"It's time you went," he said. "Never mind about me—I've always had a horror of passing out dressed in those filthy rags. Glad you had plenty of ammunition—I'll have a merry time. Goodby and good luck."

He held out his hand, took John's in a firm grip.

For a moment they stood motionless, silent.

Then Frank Hervey shouted contemptuously,

"You filthy rotter," suddenly twisted his nephew's arm, flung the door open wide.

"Get out, you ——!" he shouted again and yanked the other forward, sending him staggering through the doorway, out into the open, kicking him viciously as he passed.

As John Hervey fell to the ground he saw men advancing from the jungle toward the house.

A rifle cracked behind him; one of the advancing men fell. The others scattered, sought shelter and opened fire on the trim, uniformed figure which stood silhouetted in the doorway of the hut.

The door slammed to. Frank Hervey had darted inside and was firing rapidly at the spurts of white smoke which came from the gray-green of the bush.

FRANTICALLY, cursing loudly in the vernacular, John Hervey crawled on hands and knees toward the bush where the spurts of smoke were thickest.

He reached the shelter of the bush in safety but still crawled forward, jabbering with fear. Right through a line of native soldiers he passed, finally barging into the legs of a white man.

He knelt erect, patted the white man's leggings supplicatingly.

"What is it, you?" the white man asked

in harsh, guttural sounding English, and when the kneeling man mouthed inarticulately, repeated the question in the vernacular.

"A strange white man came to my hut," John Hervey whined. "He beat me and turned me out of my place. I go to ask M'Jambe for justice."

Aommandt von Wissman grinned.

"It's a pity he didn't kill you," he said. "Get out of my way before I rectify his shortcoming."

John Hervey passed on, crawling still on hands and knees, an abject, debased creature. Not until he had left the hut and the warriors who surrounded it far behind did he rise to his feet. Then, going swiftly, he made a wide detour through the bush, coming on to the trail which led to the south about the hour of sunset.

Behind him sounded the rattle of firearms. He halted and looked back along the trail. Uncle Frank was doing himself well, he thought, and his eyes shone with the pride of family.

Presently a bright glow lighted the dull grayness of the bush just beyond the turn in the trail. The hut was on fire—

He heard exultant yells, then a loud explosion, then silence. The light vanished; a cloud of smoke hung pall-like above the bush.

He walked on soberly. He knew now that his mission was safe. Confident that the man who had spied out their secret was destroyed, and their secret safe, the German forces would return to their stronghold and give no thought to the wreck of a white man who had passed through their lines.

Acting on a sudden impulse he halted, turned about, and saluted.

Then, somewhat self-consciously, he hurried on.

"It was a good way to die, though," he muttered, "and I'm jolly glad that I did what I did in the portrait gallery."

A few minutes later the clouds closed down and the rain fell, completely obliterating his tracks.

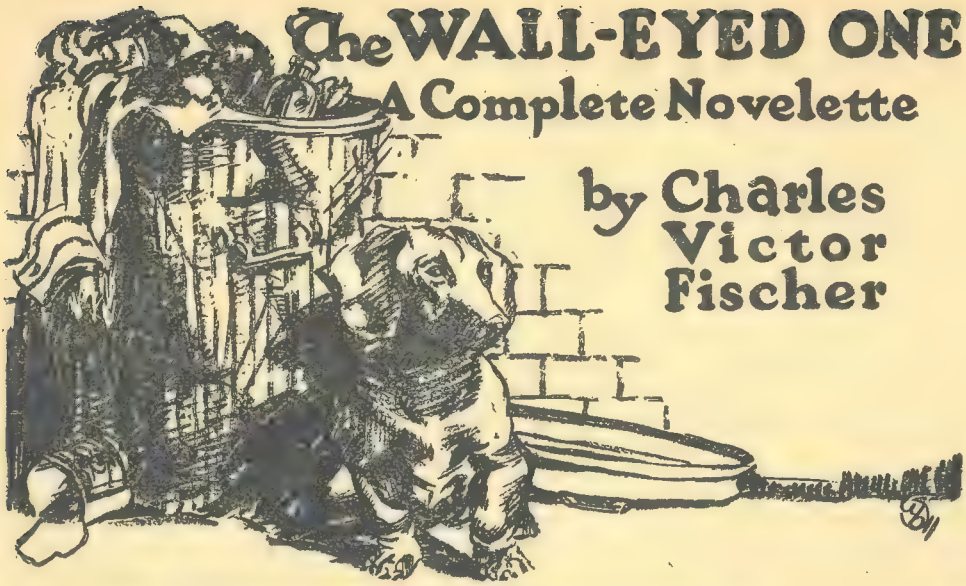
LESS than a month later a party of white men accompanied by an army of native carriers arrived at the kraal of M'Jambe. Armored cars followed closely in their wake. They announced that they were prospectors and immediately, in proof of it, commenced operations which, strangely enough, had little or nothing to do with mining. But, undoubtedly, those operations were the reason why, in the early days of the Great War, the papers were able to print a paragraph to the effect that "a large German garrison with vast stores of ammunition and food supplies has surrendered to our forces at M'Jambe kraal on the Northern Rhodesia frontier."

The same day that item appeared, the Herveys entered their portrait gallery for the first time since young John had joined the service. The occasion was the death of that old martinet, Grandfather John Hervey.

For a time they forgot the occasion which had brought them together as they crowded about the portrait of Frank Hervey and looked at it, silently, wonderingly.

It faced out into the room—a laurel wreath hung above it—and after the word "renegade" something had been added so that it now read:

"Renegade—Resurgam!"



The WALL-EYED ONE

A Complete Novelette

by Charles Victor Fischer

Author of "Madcap's Moment," "Between Gentlemen," etc.

OVER in the East Side section of New York City he went by the name of "Monk." You couldn't look at him and call him anything else. All his face lacked of being a gorilla's was the hair. He was short of body and legs, but had an enormous spread of fleshy shoulders, a great depth of chest, and arms so long that his hands—if hands those clusters of gnarled, clawlike hooks could be called—hung to his knees.

Monk lived in a cellar in Gilligan's Alley. The police knew a little of him. He had been brought in twice—once in connection with an opium-den raid, another time on the suspicion of peddling dope. Both times he had been released for lack of evidence. He had been watched, subsequently; but beyond the fact that he lived without working, nothing irregular had been established against him. The reports on him stated that he took long walks, far uptown, some days over in Brooklyn, and made friends with many dogs. That was all.

It was just enough. One day the police of Brooklyn had reported to them by a gentleman of that city that his dog Fannie, a full-blooded dachshund, great with pup, had either strayed or been stolen. A police lieutenant in New York, who had a knack for adding two and two, summoned a young officer named Mallow.

"I've got a hunch you'll find Fannie down in this Monk bird's cellar-hole," said the lieutenant. "You might find a litter of pups with her; she was on the verge of her mamahood when she disappeared. Be careful. Don't let him get his claws on you. According to a couple of chinks we pinched with him that night, he's something of a strangler."

That lieutenant should have been sitting in a higher seat. For certainly he had soaked the nail on the head.

THE room was not at all to Fannie's liking. It was small, squalid, and it stank of evil as well as of filth. Cobwebs hung from the smoky ceiling and corners, splashings of tobacco-juice mottled the walls, and butts and cuds and matches were strewn over the floor. One dim gas-light guttered down upon a table heaped with dirty dishes, two rickety chairs, a ragged-looking couch and a vermin-infested box of straw. In that box lay Fannie and her family. And that was what hurt her pride. For, indeed, it was a far cry from Fannie's downy feather bed at home; it was really no place at all in which to bring seven thoroughbred dachshund pups into the world.

But the most repelling thing in this filthy hole, in Fannie's eyes, was the hideous

man-ape sitting on the edge of the box, grinning down upon her and her babies. Fannie feared that face. She wished now that she had feared it yesterday evening at dusk, over near home. For the life of her Fannie couldn't understand why she had followed the ugly monster! Curiosity, perhaps. The hideous one had grinned at her and uttered coaxing words. Never dreaming that the huge talon-like hand that the Monk had held out to her as he stooped down was about to choke her wind off, Fannie had just stood there, tongue lolling out in a laugh—for his was the funniest face she had ever seen.

Then the whole world had gone wild, crazy. That bunch of bony hooks had clutched her about the neck and squeezed. Came a moment of frantic but futile struggling. How she had kicked and wriggled! But it was no use. Those steel-like fingers had dug in at her throat till her lungs felt about to burst and her eyes to pop out. Stars and fiery streaks had danced and leaped before her swimming eyes, and a hellish jangle and blare of bells and horns had filled her head. Then something had been thrown over her, a piece of cloth, or a bag. That was all. Next she knew, here she was.

Then had come the puppies. They were seven, and comprised as fine a litter as ever was given birth to. Five sons, there were, and two daughters, and every one a blue-blood. And no one was more fully conscious of that blue blood than was Fannie herself. Which was why she growled when the gorilla-man reached down and began pawing over her children. Wise in puppy psychology, Fannie was keenly anxious to have her children make a good beginning, and not come in contact with contaminating influences.

For her growl she received a stunning cuff on the ear.

"Nip me an' I'll bat your brains out!" snarled the Monk.

She lay there quiet and suffered him to go on pawing over her children. All of their eyes were now open, and they were having a gay old time squirming and tumbling against their mother's soft warm belly. One after another Monk held them up to the light of the gas.

Monk saw something in one of those pups that caused him to scowl and then slouch over and hold the tiny face close up to the gas-light. Under the sudden glare the puppy let out a wee squeal and blinked its eyes. And now every ridge and mound in Monk's apish face was quivering with rage.

"Cock-eyed!" he snarled, his bloodshot eyes blazing. "Yuh —— little rat, you're cock-eyed outwards!"

The puppy was wofully wall-eyed. Each eye looked straight out.

Now cross-eyed or wall-eyed, it made no difference, in Monk's belief; either phase of the condition of strabismus was sure to bring misfortune, not only to one thus conditioned, but to all who might become intimately associated with such a one.

Monk drew back the hand holding the pup.

"Y'ain't gonna bring me bad luck, 'cause I'm gonna scatter your brains on the wall!"

Still weak though she was from her puppy ordeal, Fannie managed to clamber out of the box. She came waddling over toward him, after the bow-legged manner of her kind, deliberately, stupidly, but with a gleam of deadly purpose in her eyes, and her curled-up lips baring her fangs. Monk dropped the pup and turned to face her, hefting one of his enormous feet for a swing. But Fannie wasn't really looking for a fight. She only wanted her baby. She bent over the tiny thing and picked it up in her mouth.

Monk would have kicked her, but just then his attention was withdrawn. He heard footfalls on the stone steps leading down from the alley to the outer basement door. These were followed by the heavy *clump-clump* of brogans, which he instinctively knew to be those of a cop, on the basement floor. Then came a series of raps on his door.

"Drowser!"

Monk's bulging eyes rolled. Then he moved. Stooping, he grasped a clawful of Fannie's scruff. As he lifted her, Fannie let go of her pup. With a sideswipe of one of his shoes Monk scooped the little wall-eyed one over under the table, then dropped Fannie in the box. He reached out for an old overcoat hanging on the wall, intending to cover Fannie and her family with it. But he didn't have time. The door came in with a bang, forced open.

In all verity Monk looked the gorilla at bay, as he crouched, head thrust forward, his hooked fingers hanging below his knees, before the entering policeman; his face was

a hideous complex of blazing eyes and ferocious teeth.

There was little to be said; and Mallow said it.

"I want that she-hound."

And then young Mallow began to have his hands full. Never had he faced any such proposition as this. Not that Monk took him unawares. Fast fighter, fist and rough-and-tumble, that Mallow was, he instantly foresaw Monk's rush and met him with a straight-out, battering-ram left, his big fist crashing between the half gorilla's eyes and bringing him to a reeling halt. And Mallow followed that up with a terrific right swing to the jaw. It was a perfectly delivered wallop, his fist landing on the "button," Mallow thought. But strangely Monk didn't fall. He just stood there, at a half crouch, swaying dizzily, his rolling eyes bulging like two glass balls, his clawlike hands still opening and closing down beside his knees. His whole attitude was that of one who was knocked out but didn't know it.

There Mallow was fooled. In the ring he had seen men thus remain on their pins for some few split seconds, after stopping a knockout blow, then crumble over in a heap. But Monk didn't do that. He spun completely about. And then—

A cat couldn't have leaped quicker than Monk did toward the door. But instead of plunging on out through the door for a getaway, he stopped, pivoting. So quickly had he leaped that he now stood behind Mallow. Mallow was turning to face him when Monk leaped again. He lighted astraddle of Mallow's back, with both legs clasped round the policeman's body. Unerringly those huge claws closed and locked around Mallow's neck.

Mallow grinned as he thudded to the floor under the impact. For he was a fighter. Only two years before he had been one of the great middleweights in the United States Navy. Today he was the acknowledged best man on the force. He had all the qualities that go to the making of a champion—the marrow and muscle, the lightning coordination of hand and foot and brain; he had speed, cleverness, withal self-confidence. But the greatest fighter in the world couldn't have fought that thing clinging to his back.

Mallow quickly realized that he wasn't fighting a man. Strive as he would to loosen that choking steel-like collar of claws, he failed. He could get no hold. Monk's bony digits were so solidly locked about his neck that Mallow couldn't wedge his fingers down inside of them and thus pry them loose.

And there was no dislodging him. Down on his hands and knees with that two hundred pounds of snarling fury on his back, Mallow heaved and strained, tugged this way and that, squirmed like an eel in his efforts to twist his body, to roll over. He jabbed backward with his elbows, kicked up with his heels. He did succeed finally in throwing a backward half-somersault; that is he rose up and then let himself fall over backward. But though that fetched him up on top, it left him worse off than before; he was on top, but with his hands and feet fanning the air, helpless. And when at length he managed to roll over again, Monk rolled right along. There was no give; Monk's legs and claws were locked about his body and neck.

And all the while those powerful claws were flattening his windpipe. Mallow couldn't breathe. He couldn't even gag.

There was red in Mallow's vision now. Everything swam in a haze before his eyes. Vaguely, in blurred outline, he saw Fannie. The noble little mother hound was attempting to pick up her tiny offspring, which tumbled about over the floor near the two snorting, straining giants, and get it out of the way. Then Mallow's head crashed to the floor and everything was drowned in an onrush of lights and blaring noises.

Things went black. The noise in Mallow's head rose to a thunderous roar. He felt himself shooting off through space. He was choking, smothering.

He was dying. He had that indescribable feeling of having parted company with himself. He saw himself, far off in the black void; and he saw himself not in the uniform of a New York policeman but in that of an American bluejacket. And Mallow the bluejacket was waving good-by to Mallow the cop.

He was no longer trying to breathe. He felt no further need of air. In fact he no longer felt himself to possess lungs. All sense-perception was gone. Only his mind functioned, and that feebly, in a fluttering way pulsing on to that hazy consciousness of falling, falling, falling, with Mallow the bluejacket waving good-by.

EMERGING from the realm of tweet-tweet that evening, the first thing Mallow saw was Fannie bending over that wall-eyed pup, nuzzling and licking it, and with sobbing dog noises, trying to coax it back to life. The pup lay there inert. Fannie looked at Mallow with eyes so sad that he forgot his own plight.

"Come here, girl," he muttered thickly, sitting up, with rueful eye contemplating the motionless pup. He reached out and picked it up. It was limp and cold. Its mouth was open, and only the whites of its eyes were visible between the slightly parted lids. Holding it to his ear, Mallow could hear nothing, not the faintest indication of heart-throb or lung-action.

He took it outside and dropped it in a garbage can. Then from one of the mothers of Gilligan's Alley he borrowed a large basket. Into this he put Fannie and the remainder of her pups.

Late that evening at the precinct Mallow announced that he was going to quit being a policeman. He didn't state why; only that he was going back in the Navy. Which was the best of reasons, for about that time Uncle Sam had grown tired of turning the other cheek to Mustache Billy and was about to declare war, and hence would soon need men.

BUT the funny thing about this was, that pup wasn't dead.

Early next morning a little youngster of Gilligan's Alley, one Max Mokes, Jr., son of the proprietor of the Mokes Coats and Pants Company, found the tiny wall-eyed fellow in that can of garbage with its snout pointed skyward and squealing in a way that bespoke sound lungs.

When little Max came galloping home in triumph with his find, Mother Mokes lavishly provided the pup with a saucer of milk. But after he had lapped his fill, and she picked him up and noted his ocular defect, Mrs. Mokes threw up both hands and her eyes went wide with horror. Not so her lord and master, however. The eyes of Mr. Mokes, seated at breakfast, went narrow with shrewdness.

Not that he was less superstitious than she. He was even more so. Which made things not all the worse but all the better for the wall-eyed pup. Mr. Mokes pointed out that this pup was not cross-eyed, but the opposite. If good was the direct opposite of bad, he reasoned, then the condition of wall-eyes must be invested with gladness and good fortune, as opposed to that of cross-eyes being invested with sadness and misfortune. Moreover, he pointed to the fact that the Mokes Coats and Pants Company had not been prospering of late. Wherefore—

"We'll give it to de cock-eyed pup a chence, Rosy," he decided. And forthwith he named the pup—"Profit."

From the very beginning Profit thrived in the Mokes family. He was treated royally. In fact he fared better than did any of the nine Mokes children. He got all the milk Mother Mokes could spare, and all the children could steal from her, with now and then a few drops out of the old man's bottle of *shlivervitz*—when he wasn't looking—poured in. Also they fed him all the soup he could lap up. And later, when he had sprouted a few teeth, they fed him chunks of meat and smoked fish—when Mother Mokes' back was turned.

Months passed. Profit grew like rubber. His growth was wholly lengthwise; he just stretched right out, at the rate of about a half-inch a day, into the longest, leanest slender-snouted, bow-legged thing a person ever looked at. He didn't look like a dog at all, but like a lizard.

Things went fine for Profit during those early summer months. He had only to eat and sleep, or waddle about the store of the M. P. & C. Co., or sit in the doorway and watch the many khaki-clad youths that had now commenced to people the streets. Profit was sitting soft. What strengthened his prestige was that since his adoption into the Mokes' family, the Mokes' Coat and Pants Company had prospered.

But alas for that chapter of Profit's life, one day an evil wind blew a man into Max Mokes' store who announced that he represented Local Seventeen of the Fish Cleaners' Union; that his fraternity was going on an outing, and was in the market for two hundred pairs of white pants to be worn on said occasion.

The man made the announcement standing out in the middle of the store. Mr. Mokes had a Godlike moment. An electric quiver shot up his backbone. He well-nigh snapped that backbone in bowing his affability. But when he straightened up—

The representative of the Fish Cleaners' Union was on his way out. He was walking backward, holding up both hands with palms forward, and his eyes, bulging with horror, looking downward at Profit.

It was plain to Max Mokes that the man was afflicted with the cock-eye phobia. Which did not help Profit's case a bit. It took Mr. Mokes about ten minutes to recover from the shock. Then it took him less than ten seconds to get into action. Profit debouched to the sidewalk on the fly, with one of Mr. Mokes' enormous shoes flying him a close second.

They simply gave him the air. There was unity of purpose in the Mokes' family. From then on Profit got the broom, the dish-cloth, the poker, whatever Mother Mokes had in hand, whenever he essayed to enter the kitchen. The Mokes' children snarled at him and stoned him out of the yard.

Now a mongrel cur might have sat back on his haunches and whined at the skies. Profit was a thoroughbred, with two untainted lines of pedigrees behind him, both tracing back through many generations of blue-blooded dachshunds. Pride was his heritage. There was no whine, no cringe in him. He was no groveler. This matter of his excommunication baffled his understanding, so far as cause went. But he did comprehend the effect. He saw the point: He was not wanted. So with his head back and tail straight out he pointed his long tapering snout to the windward and fared forth, sedate and serene, to face the world alone.

A DOG without family connections rambles a rough road. Profit got it going and coming, and usually he got it in the neck. For with dogs, as with men, personality is a tremendous factor in the struggle for subsistence. In those hungry days following his banishment Profit saw many other hobo dogs win homes. Some of them were mutts of the meanest and lowliest mongrel type; curs with dirty noses and silly eyes and grinning mouths, with nothing in their heads save roguery, and some of them, forsooth, with more breeds in their make-ups than lice in their mangy hairs. But they won homes. They had personalities. Something in their silly, grinning faces got across. Sooner or later some man or boy came along and uttered the open sesame, "Come on, Fido." And away they went.

But he? Nay nay. Breed he had, and intelligence. But blood and brains couldn't compensate for those terrible wall-eyes. Many times people stopped and cast appraising looks at him. He had the head, a beautifully shaped head, the tapering snout, the long lizard-like body, the wide bow-legs—any one could see at a glance that he was a blooded hound. But his eyes were against him. The instant people got a close-up look into those wall-eyes they snarled, "Git!"

He got, of course; for pride forbade him to persist where he was not wanted. But never did he sneak or slink away; he moved with deliberate sedateness of carriage, with his tail straight out and with the quivering point of his nose lifted.

Yes, Profit was a bit of a highbrow. But unlike most human highbrows in distress, who had rather sit in seatless pants and count their belly-wrinkles than go to work, Profit was willing to scratch.

And it was stingy scratching in those days, with the doughboys in France and the gobs out on the Atlantic all busy chasing the Huns, and everybody at home Hooverizing. They were poor people in that section of New York City, and what bones they threw into the garbage cans had long since been gnawed clean—before going into the soup pots, in fact. And then, frisking garbage cans is not the happiest of occupations. A fellow has to knock 'em over in order to frisk 'em properly; and it doesn't take much of that to arouse public sentiment against himself.

So that Profit was kept pretty much on the high lope, with some cop's club or Judy O'Grady's broom loping him a close second. But he could run; moreover, those wall-eyes possessed an uncanny power of judging the distance and velocity of flying objects. See backward? Better. He could see to the left of his tail with his right eye; and vice versa.

It was a dog's life. And the nights were worse. It was the cats, the sneaking gutter cats that prowled and howled all night long. No matter where Profit crawled to sleep for the night, in a sewer-pipe, a barrel, beneath a step, always one of those snarling, spitting cat things came along and claimed ownership. In no time he was joined by his howling gang, and then followed a rough-house of fang against claw. They never

chased Profit, for the reason that this world has never seen the dozen gutter cats that could make that dog run. But they did render his nights miserable in that they compelled him to keep both eyes open.

Naturally the heave and stress of such an existence was taking its toll. No dog can gallop all day and fight all night on an empty stomach and hold his weight. Profit fell away to a long, scrawny creature of strings and bones and skin. Then Autumn came, and in addition to the ravages of hunger he commenced to suffer from the cold. Suddenly the nights changed from periods of wakeful misery to periods of shivering agony, with the moan of the icy wind and the rattle of his trembling bones added to the noises of the spitting cat things. It was hellish. Mornings he was so stiff and numb that he could scarcely drag himself out of his pipe, box or barrel.

It grew colder still. Clouds of dust swept through the streets with each roaring gust of wind. People were wearing heavy overcoats. Profit grew leaner. The garbage-can friskings were about petered out. The cans froze to the earth, so that he could no longer capsize them; and he was too weak to hop up and clamber into them. When thirsty, he had to lick the ice in the gutters.

Along toward Christmas time Profit had three feet in the grave. He was the sorriest looking dog in the world. Every rib of him showed. His protruding eyes wept perpetually and copiously and his tongue was always out. He fairly gushed tears and saliva, which, instantly freezing, gave him a beard of icicles. People looked at him and laughed. What they saw to laugh at was a poser to Profit. He often wondered. But he was too hungry and discouraged to take offense. Sad and forlorn, he went staggering on his weary way, his watery wall-eyes ever questing and his wet nostrils ever sniffing for a bone, a crust of bread, anything that would keep that low burning fire within him from going out.

For he was irrepressible. Little of meat or muscle was there within that long frame of bones; but within that frame pulsed a great soul. For aught to the contrary, the same soul might have once upon a time inhabited the frame of a man, some great man. Maybe so, maybe no. Certainly Profit's was a heart that could not quit. The thought embodied in the old, old saying, "Every dog has his day," smouldered in his mind. He felt that somewhere in this hellish world was a man-god who the instant he clapped eyes upon him would snap fingers and say, "Come on, Fido." And to keep body and soul together till that moment came was the one desire that dominated him, that kept his limber legs from sagging.

ONE cold, dark gray Monday morning Profit squatted on the sidewalk before a butcher shop in Third Avenue. The door of the store was open; but to look at Profit you couldn't have told that he was aware of that. His right eye looked downtown, his left uptown. But out of the inner corner of each eye he saw what made both eyes glow with the fire of an idea. The saliva drooled from his lolling tongue, freezing into long icicles. Profit was doing what certain logic-proof people like to tell you animals can't do. He was reasoning.

In that store, over the edge of the butcher's block hung a string of sausages, the end two feet above the floor. Profit was weighing and considering his chances of easing in there, grabbing the end of that toothsome string and making a gallop for it, leaving merely his compliments.

It took good generalship. Profit had that. When a large stout woman came along and turned in at the store, he waddled in on her heels. He walked in with that unconcerned, indifferent manner of an ordinary domesticated dog, without by so much as the flutter of an eyelid divulging the direction of his mind's content. But he didn't come out that way. He was in the store only a split second. He emerged galloping, the long string of sausages trailing behind, the butcher's cleaver slicing the air within an inch of his left ear. And as he galloped he swallowed.

Profit ported his helm, turning up Third Avenue. And that was his first lucky move in a long time—since the day of his adoption into the Mokes family, in fact.

Down Third Avenue came an American bluejacket, a dark-eyed, tanned youngster of strong features and wide shoulders. He swung along with the wide roll of a deep-water man, taking up most of the sidewalk, his hands in the breast pockets of his pea-coat. His flat hat was tilted down over his left ear at the usual seagoing angle of forty-five, giving him a heavy list to port. The wide bottoms of his pants flapped in the

wind, each threatening at every step to wrap itself around the other leg. This tar was one of the radio operators of the big scout-cruiser *Rolling Lou*—she being anchored up the Hudson a ways for a breathing spell before her next gallop across. She was on convoy duty.

Heavy with sausage, having swallowed a dozen or so of the string, Profit, too, was galloping a zigzag course. It was written that these two should collide. They did, and with violence, the bluejacket sitting abruptly down on the sidewalk, Profit somersaulting a couple of times and finally fetching up on his haunches.

"Wha'd'yuh mean, rammin' me head-on, you sausage-swallerin', lop-eared landlubber! Don't you know your rules of the road concernin' bow-on collisions! Gut me amidships, mate, but that was a —— of a course you were steerin'!"

Profit laughed, for he felt very foolish. The sailor picked up his flat hat. Then after eyeing Profit's bow-legs a moment he leaned forward and, speaking close to Profit's nose, quoted a passage from the Bluejacket's Bible.

> If on your starboard red appear,
> It is your duty to keep clear.

"Bust me in the bow, mate, if I didn't have the right of way on you! My port runnin'-light was a good two points on your starboard bow! Where were your eyes!"

The gob stopped, with a quick forward thrust of his head. Reaching out with both hands he took hold of Profit's head and drew him in close. For about three seconds he held Profit's face close to his and glared into those wall-eyes.

"Gallopin' gunboats!" he exploded. "Boy, you've got an awful pair of hawse-holes! Why, you're cock-eyed outboard!"

Pulling his head loose from the crushing grasp of those powerful hands, Profit poked his long nose in beneath the lapels of the bluejacket's peacoat. He nuzzled close, for it was snug and warm in there against that muscular body. It was the body of a man. Profit knew that by the thunderous throbs of the heart against the inner walls of that swelling and falling chest. A moment later he came to know something else. The instant the bluejacket began pulling his lower portions under the overcoat and buttoning the coat over him, Profit knew that *here was his man.* Those strong hands felt over him roughly, but they did not hurt him. Profit snuggled in for all he was worth.

A bluejacket sitting in the middle of the sidewalk on a cold winter morning with an almost dead dog in his lap is not a common sight. A crowd of people, on their way to work, had gathered about them. The idea was that Jack had a bit of a bun on. A giant policeman, one Terry Sweeney, came pushing his way through.

"Come on now, be along with yuh'se," Terry ordered the crowd. He halted and stood akimbo, looking down upon the gob buttoning his coat over the dog. "I say, lad," he inquired, "is it a ride in the pie wagon you're after lookin' for?"

"Not exactly," answered the gob, without looking up.

"Well, that's what you'll be after gittin' if yuh don't move along," Terry informed him.

Still the gob didn't look up. He kept his eyes on the policeman's shoes, which were about size twelve.

"Bust me in the hawse-holes," said the tar finally, "there's only one man on the New York police force with feet as big as them." He looked up. "Terry Sweeney, if you ever ride me in the pie wagon I'll get you, if I have to come back and join the police force to do it."

The crowd moved on, every one grinning back at Sweeney the cop and Mallow the ex-cop as they stood there shaking hands.

Sweeney told Mallow what little was known of Profit.

"He's a hobo. Remember Max Mokes, the Jew coat-and-pants man? He had 'im for a while, last spring. One o' his kids found 'im when he was a pup, I believe, in an ash-can over in Gilligan's Alley."

"In an ash-can?" Mallow unbuttoned the top button of his coat, allowing Profit to push his snout out. "An ash-can?"

"Sure. Mokes took 'im in for a while. Thin the pup give 'im bad luck, with the cock-eyes of 'im, an' they give 'im the boot."

Mallow's dark eyes shot fire.

"Well, shoot away my fore-top! In an ash-can in Gilligan's Alley? When was it young Mokes found him?"

"Oh, way back a ways—last spring—about the time you quit the force."

Mallow laughed and said,

"Well I'll be ——. Say," he broke off, "did any one ever bring in the Monk?"

"Divil a bit."

They talked a few minutes. But Mallow was pressed for time.

"I've got to make an uptown train, Terry," he said, reaching out to shake hands. "My ship is anchored up the river off Eighty-second Street. I'm gonna take a chance with this hound. If I can get him aboard the *Lou* I'll throw a few feeds into him and take some of the belly-wrinkles out of him."

Mallow's main object was to get the poor little hound fed up and on his pins. He had no hope of keeping Profit aboard the *Rolling Lou* for long. Animals were strictly tabu on that ship. "Bear" Blackstone, the bristling, roaring old skipper of the *Rolling Lou*, would tolerate no pets, neither beast nor bird. His argument was that he already had five hundred human monkeys, jackasses and parrots aboard, and that was enough.

AS HARD luck would have it, the Bear had to be standing back at the quarter-deck rail when Mallow came up over the gangway. The officer of the deck, Ensign Gates, failed to notice the bulge in the front of Mallow's peacoat as he checked him in and bade him go forward. Not so the Bear.

"Mr. Gates," he bawled, "call that man back!"

As Mallow walked aft he unbuttoned his peacoat. No use trying to hide his act now. Saluting, he clicked heels before the Big Noise, letting Profit fall to the deck.

Up to then there had been a flicker of amusement in the old Bear's eyes. He had erroneously surmised that bulge in the front -a Mallow's coat to be made by a different kind of dog—a bottle; and he was anticipating some fun, finishing up with the meting out of some extra duty, or restriction from liberty for Mallow. But when he saw Profit, the Bear underwent an abrupt transformation; his leathery red skin turned purple, his gray eyes grew watery and goggling and his bulbous nose looked more than ever like a strawberry. He bristled all over, his gray hairs sticking out like needles below the band of his cap, and ditto his gray mustache and bushy brows. Planting his short, squat figure on feet wide apart, he drew in his paunch and pushed out his chest. He was about to commence firing.

"Captain," the gob beat him to it. "I found this poor little hound in the gutter and—"

"That'll do, that'll do!" the Bear cut him off. He made a noise deep down in his paunch, like the rumbling of distant thunder, as he cleared his throat. His eyes were blazing forth murderous intent now, like those of a bear proper, a bear about to do battle, bristling, growling, ready to crunch and swallow down meat and bone.

"Why didn't you request permission from the officer of the deck to bring that animal aboard?" he began.

The long quarter-deck was a place of profound silence. It was a few minutes before eight o'clock, and the *Lou's* band was lined up and standing by for "colors" back near the taffrail. Two quartermasters stood at the flagstaff, one holding the flag made up in a huge roll and ready to toss out into the wind at the word, the other with the halyard in hand ready to hoist. Near them stood the chief quartermaster, his watch in hand. But for the moment all attention was drawn from the coming ceremony, and all eyes were fixed on the Bear, Mallow and Profit.

"The poor little mutt was hungry, sir," Mallow evaded.

"Shut up!" snapped the Bear. Then he roared: "Do you mean to stand there and tell me that you didn't know animals are not allowed on this ship?"

"I was only bringin' him aboard for long enough to get a feed into him and then—"

"Shut-up!" The Bear glared in impotent wrath at him. Then he underwent another lightning change of expression as he looked own and noted the condition of Profit's eyes. A short, choked-off chuckle escaped him. He batted his eyes and fingered his mustache as he stood there looking down upon that trembling thing of bones and bow-legs nuzzling against Mallow's leg. The Bear's rough skin turned from purple back to red. The glint of wrath left his eyes. He scratched his rum-blossom a moment. For bullish and hard-boiled old man of the wind and wave though old Bear Blackstone was, he was not utterly devoid of that finer stuff. Inwardly he sympathized with the little derelict dog, and admired the quality in young Mallow that had prompted his act. But first, and above all else, Bear Blackstone was a naval officer, withal an officer of the stern and rigid old school, the hard-fisted,

wooden-ship and iron-men era. He had never known good to come from an officer's giving in to an enlisted man.

"This is a man-o'-war—in a time of war," he bawled out, "not a hospital ship for animals! Back ashore with him!" He pointed a fat finger forward toward the starboard gangway.

"Can't I keep him aboard till this evening liberty goes, sir?"

"That'll do, that'll—"

Then the chief quartermaster shouted: "Eight o'clock, sir!" The officer of the deck shouted: "Colors!" The quartermaster, holding the huge roll of red, white and blue bunting tossed it far out into the wind, the one with the halyard hoisted and Old Glory leaped to the flagstaff. The band commenced playing "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Profit rolled his woful wall-eyes to the right and left—which is to say he took in everything within a complete circle. Of the many impressions that impinged upon his dog's brain—the screeching tugs and ferries plying up and down and across the river, the gulls battling in the wind, the city's skyscrapers against the leaden overhead—one thing in particular Profit noted: Every man on this long gray ship's upper decks stood as stiff and rigid as a statue, while that stirring melody rose and mingled with the moan of the wind, and they all faced in the same direction—aft. Perhaps Profit didn't think the idea in just those words; but his mental content must have been identical, or nearly so, with the thought embodied in those words, "When in Rome, do as Romans do." For Profit pointed his long tapering snout in the same direction as all the rest of the snouts were pointed, aft toward Old Glory, now flying in stately majesty from the staff-top. And he stood so, as stiff and tense as his weak and wabbly bow-legs would permit, till the ceremony was over, till the officer of the deck shouted "Carry on."

Which had not escaped the eyes of the old Bear. He began chuckling, as he turned away from Mallow and walked outboard to the port rail. This old raw-meat man had his little humorous quirk. Profit had gone through the duty of "standing up for his beans," as gobs put it, in a way that tickled His Hoary Hirsuteness. Out at the port-rail he turned and grinned back at the bow-legged, long-snouted, funny-eyed thing of skin and bones. "He-he-he," issued up out of the deeps of his paunch. A moment later, "Har-har-har." To the executive officer, Commander Wiltz, known as "Carbolic," who stood a short distance forward of him, the Bear chortled—

"I say, Wiltz, did you see him stand up for his beans?"

Carbolic's sharp, hooked nose went up and down. He grinned.

Mallow stooped, picked up Profit and then started forward.

"Say, lad," the Bear shouted after him, "you may keep him aboard till this evening's liberty party shoves off. Fill him up. But remember! He goes ashore in this evening's boat!"

THERE were other new faces on the *Lou's* decks that morning, Mallow observed, walking forward. A draft of one hundred "war babies"—recruits, mostly firemen—had been transferred from the Brooklyn Navy Yard two days before, Saturday afternoon. Mallow thought nothing of this, for "trench dodgers," as the regular service men dubbed them, were coming in the Navy fast nowadays. Had he seen one of those faces in particular, Mallow would have thought a great deal of it.

A pair of eyes fixed Mallow the instant he entered the door leading through the superstructure bulwarks from the quarter-deck to the gun-deck. They were such eyes as one might see in the Rogues' Gallery—which was exactly where they belonged; small, squinted, the dark irises burning with the evil glitter of instant recognition blended with hatred and fear. Their owner drew back behind the breech of a six-inch gun as Mallow passed him. Then he watched Mallow walk forward to the radio-office, which was amidships. There was treachery that wouldn't tarry at murder in those eyes; for that fellow was Monk Drowser.

On the Navy's books he was one of the many thousands of Smiths, a fireman third-class, a coal-heaver. He might have enlisted in the Navy to dodge the draft; but it would appear more likely that he did so to dodge the police. Certainly he was not in the service out of any patriotic sentiment.

During the few minutes following his seeing Mallow, Monk's movements were not those of a rational being. He slouched

erratically to and fro, forward and aft, and athwartships, as if either he had a bee in his pants or couldn't stand the smell of himself. His one inch and a quarter of almost horizontal forehead was compressed down to three-quarters of an inch of puzzled-baboon wrinkles, below which gleamed eyes like those of a baboon who was not only puzzled but badly scared. His thick lips opened and closed convulsively, showing appalling flashes of tobacco-stained teeth.

Was it Mallow? Monk wasn't positive. It might be a trick of his fancy. Or perhaps it was merely a resemblance. But certainly that gob he had just seen carrying a dog forward did look like the copper he had choked to insensibility that evening several months before. Of one thing Monk was certain. There was not room on this ship for both Mallow and him. An idea came to him.

There was a skylight in the overhead bulkhead of the radio-office which opened on the upper deck, or top-side. Its being directly over the radio operator's desk made that a good point of vantage from which to obtain a furtive eyeful of the official radio communication going through. The gobs could look down through the skylight and read what the radio operators wrote on the typewriter. To that spot went the Monk.

WHEN Mallow put Profit down on the desk before "Snapper" Lesner, the operator on watch, Snapper's fat face paled and his bleak blue eyes stared with that look of fright and awe of one seeing a ghost. He took off the 'phones, ran a fat hand through his red hair and sat back.

"Woof!" Snapper gasped at the skeleton of a dog before him. Then he flared up to Mallow, "What are you tryin' to do, scare a guy to death! Good Lord! What lamps!"

"He's a thoroughbred, Snapper."

"Huh." Snapper grinned. "You sneezed a snootful, I don't think." Then again, "Good Lord! What lamps! Thoroughbred, eh? Now, Mallow, if you said a *full-bred*, I'd believe you. He sure is full of breeds, all right. But don't try to slobber at me that God Almighty ever put eyes like them on a thoroughbred!"

"Say, sailor," Mallow returned sourly, "if anybody should ride up on a bologna wagon and ask you, God Almighty don't play favorites. If I know my little book, they all look alike to God Almighty, blue-bloods and far-downs. But get me, this hound is a full-blooded dog. I tell you, I know his history! He belongs to a man over in Brooklyn. And that's where he goes this evening. Not that I want to take him back, understand. If Bear Blackstone would let me, I'd keep him myself and make a war baby out of him. I tell you he's a thoroughbred."

Unconvinced, Snapper sat there grinning at Profit, who grinned back.

"He can see astern off his port-side with his starboard eye," Snapper observed.

Then Profit did something he shouldn't have done. He sat back on his stringy hams. Ignorance was not bliss in this case. Parts of the radio sending-set—the quenched spark-gap, the Murdock condenser and the oscillation-transformer—were mounted on the desk. With the last of these, the oscillation-transformer, which was the copper-ribbon, pancake type, Profit's bony hind quarter came in contact as he sat down. Snapper flashed Mallow a quick eye-interrogation which said—

"Shall I jolt him?"

"Don't! Cut it!"

Mallow spoke a split second too late. Men with huge head-bumps say that electricity travels 186,000 miles a second. Quick as a cat can throw its paw, Snapper reached out and made two moves—threw the antenna-transfer switch and pressed down on the sending-key, thus sending surges of Lightning's first cousin oscillating through the transmitting apparatus, through the oscillation-transformer in particular, so far as Profit was concerned, his right rump being in tight contact therewith.

It wasn't much of a shock. Had the primary apparatus, the motor-generator, been connected in— But then, of course, Snapper wouldn't have done it. Had that coil against which Profit sat been charged with the full juice the *Lou's* antenna radiated when she was at sea—well, Profit would have been a hot dog, then and there. All that was hooked in at the moment was the secondary, or auxiliary sending-set, a storage battery and spark-coil, which was all the *Lou's* radio department was allowed to use while in port. But indeed it was shock enough, and Profit felt it to the ends of his nose, ears and toes. It jerked a howl out of him and sent him flying over Snapper's head and into Mallow's arms.

"That's a dirty trick, Snapper!" Mallow flared up as he caught the leaping hound. "Keep your paws off him!" he snarled, as Snapper, a sorry look on his fat face, stood up and reached out to make amends to the quivering dog.

"Hang it, I didn't think," Snapper said weakly.

"Didn't, eh?" Mallow's strong dark face was blood-red. "Boy, you'd better cultivate that habit! You'd better think before you pull such a stunt on a dog of mine. You're lucky, Snapper! If this poor little pup hadn't jumped in my arms, I'd have swung a wallop on you that would have put you where the birds are singing'!"

"Without thinkin'," Snapper qualified.

Both grinned, and then stood there petting and soothing the trembling dog.

Mallow felt Profit abruptly grow stiff in his arms. Forthwith the wall-eyed one had forgotten his misadventure of a moment before, and was interested in something he saw overhead. His left eye looked straight up. And it was laughing, that eye. For of all the faces Profit had seen on men, that hideous complex of monkeyishness looking down through the skylight was the funniest.

Snapper looked up just in time to see Monk draw back from the skylight. Mallow didn't.

"Woof!" Snapper looked at Mallow. "Did you see that mug?'

"No."

"Good Lord! Say, what the blazes is gettin' through this ship!" Snapper demanded to know. "What are they doin', sendin' all the freaks in creation to her? Say, talk about Darwin bein' right! Go up and take a look at that guy's physog!"

MALLOW went up to the topside, but he didn't see "that freak" for the reason that that freak has seen him first. From behind a cradled steam-launch Monk watched every move Mallow made. He saw the young former cop go questing about over the superstructure deck for a few minutes, no more dreaming that it was he whom Mallow was looking for than Mallow himself dreamed that the fellow with the funny face for whom he was looking was Monk Drowser. But Mallow spent only a few minutes questing. Of greater moment to him than getting a look at the freak was the task of getting some good solid food into Profit's stomach. So he proceeded to the galley.

There had been liver for breakfast, hence there was plenty left over. About one gob in ten will eat liver. Never in all the days of his hellish life had Profit faced such a happy proposition as the task Mallow set him that morning in the *Rolling Lou's* galley. There was liver enough in the pile to feed all the hobo dogs and gutter cats in Gilligan's Alley. Profit gulped and swallowed till he was full gorged. Then he lapped up a bowl of canned milk, which a ship's cook provided. Then he gulped and swallowed some more. He kept right at it till he was stuffed.

And then what a day followed for Profit! Mallow carried him about the great ship's decks, and made him acquainted with gobs and gobs. Profit had never imagined there were so many bluejackets in the world. He had never seen more than a couple or three of them at a time. He had always considered them queer, freakish sort of individuals, and many a time he had wondered where they came from, where they lived. So this was it. But such a funny house to live in. The more Profit saw of it the more he laughed. Mallow carried him all over the ship—up forward over the short, towering forecastle; then up to the bridge where the signal-boys all looked at Profit and laughed and patted and tickled and pinched him; then below to the gun-deck, where Mallow tarried a moment at his sea-bag to change his blue flat hat for a white one; then below again to the berth-deck, where grinning and grimy firemen and oilers grinned at Profit and patted him some more.

A happier dog never lived. Profit got the glad hand wherever Mallow took him. And he liked every face he saw that morning, except one; and that one was the same face he had seen earlier looking down through the skylight into the radio-office. Profit saw that face once again, during that morning's rambles. Just as they entered the dynamo room, he saw Monk watching Mallow from a distance, his evil eyes peering around the corner of a row of clothing lockers. Profit knew there was malicious intent in those eyes. Leave it to a dog to know. But how can a dog make known what he knows?

Profit did, however, convey one portion of his mind's content to Mallow, and that was that he was perfectly satisfied with

this newly formed kinship, and that it was his whole-souled purpose to make it a permanent one. Throughout that forenoon not a move that Mallow made escaped those wall-eyes. Profit moved as Mallow's shadow, and he was totally dead to every thing and every one else.

At noon Mallow set him another stuffing proposition. This time it was pork chops. Not so bad. He never had got any pork chops in the Mokes family. Then Mallow took a blanket and in a corner of the radio-office made him a bed. But heavy with meat and well-nigh exhausted from the muddle and whirl of so much strangeness though Profit was, he flatly balked when it came to closing his eyes. Lie down on the blanket he would, but go to sleep he would not.

Profit was taking no chances. He had been fooled before in the matter of dreams. Many a time, snoozing in his sewer-pipe or barrel, Profit had dreamed of something different, something better, or at least not so bad. He had visioned himself in a less hellish environment, among friends instead of foes, being patted instead of kicked, and felt himself to be full and warm instead of hungry and shivering. And always had the snarl of some spitting cat thing disrupted the delusion and sent his wisps of imagery scattering and dissolving before the blasting realization that he was not in Heaven at all, but back in the cruel, cold, hard and hellish world, where the inexorable law of the pit was the law of life, where the fit and favored and lucky lived and laughed, and the others, the unlucky ones and the weaklings, withered and died and dried up and were forgotten. No, sir! Profit was taking no chances on closing his eyes and then waking up to find his man-god gone!

Mallow was sitting on deck stroking his head, when Carbolic Wiltz, the executive officer, entered the radio-office. Naval etiquette requires that gobs in a room rise to attention upon entrance of an officer of Carbolic's rank. Mallow did that; so did Profit, just as nice and respectful as you please. He stood there with his nose up, stiff and tense to the tip of his tail. The act penetrated Carbolic's veneer of lofty pride and drew a sour smile to his long, eagle-beaked face. He descended from his god-hood for a moment and said—

"Well, Mallow, have you got your wall-eyed dog pretty well stuffed?"

"Yes, sir," Mallow answered. "But I can't get him to go to sleep."

Carbolic stepped over to the desk and began consulting the radio file.

"I wonder if I might keep this dog, sir," Mallow added.

The executive found the message he wanted, read it, then turned to leave.

"You might," he answered, with a gleam of humor in his hawkish eyes, "if you happen to have any friends in Congress. I'm afraid it would take just about that—an act of Congress."

With which thrust in Bear Blackstone's back, Carbolic went out.

Mallow didn't obey the Bear's order and take Profit ashore in that evening's liberty boat for the reason that no liberty boat left the *Rolling Lou's* gangway that evening.

Early in the afternoon an order came by radio from Washington. Decoded, it read:

PROCEED TO HAMPTON ROADS AND REPORT TO SENIOR OFFICER PRESENT.

THE *Lou's* gobs let loose of their muscle energy. Electric cranes sang, blocks creaked and rope smoked as the boats were hoisted aboard, cradled and secured for sea. Sweat poured in the fire-rooms, where the huskies of the black-gang bent to slice-bars and shovels and made the fires roar under the boilers and the steam-gage dials move round. In less than two hours a full head of steam had been raised. In came the anchor. With great black woolpacks belching skyward from her four rakish funnels the long, lean gray sea-rambler let her towering bow swing majestically with the ebb tide till she pointed downstream, and then steamed slowly away, to sea—on what duty only bureaucratic Washington knew.

Mallow had the midnight watch that night; therefore he prepared to turn in early. After supper he introduced Profit to soap, water and ki-yi brush. It was the first scrubbing of Profit's life, and he did not like it at all, but he would have gone through a thousand times worse for Mallow, and so, though he suffered intensely, he kept his tongue lolling out in a laugh throughout the ordeal. And when it was ended Profit felt different, vastly different—much lighter, it seemed, but sleepy, ever so sleepy.

At eight bells Mallow swung and unlashed his hammock, spread out his blankets, tossed Profit up into it, and then heaved himself up and in beside him. That settled all doubt in Profit's mind. This was no dream! This god was a tangible, concrete, blood-and-flesh-and-bone god, one that would endure down through the years, not a wraith-like wisp of fancy. He solved Profit's whole problem. He was not only a meal ticket for life, but a bed mate as well.

Mallow was asleep in five minutes. Not so Profit. He lay there with one ear against Mallow's heart, his whole being becoming intent on the *thump-thump-thump* of it, his snout rising and falling with the slow, rhythmic undulations of Mallow's chest, his wall-eyes goggling at the overhead bulkhead. It was well nigh dark about them, only one dim light burning and that being covered with a paper bag—for this was in war time, the Atlantic was thick with prowling undersea sneaks that were turning loose tiny shooting devices of destruction, and there must be no lights above the water-line that might present a target. And he wondered, did Profit, as he lay there goggling, wondered what all this silent to-and-fro movement, and subdued whispering was for, and what made this funny house that moved over the water vibrate and tremble and rise and fall so, and why he couldn't seem to close his eyes when he felt so sleepy, and what Mallow would feed him in the morning.

With the distant *clang clang*, two bells, nine o'clock, being struck up on the bridge, the low mumbling and whispering along the gun-deck died down to silence, but was quickly replaced by other noises, choking, gasping and snuffling throat and nasal noises that made Profit hark back to the day when a small group of little flat-headed men with large blaring instruments of brass stood out in the middle of Gilligan's Alley and rendered the air hellish with noise. The *Lou* rolled with that slow, long and buoyant roll for which she was famous among old-timers and notorious among recruits. Hammocks swung from side to side, the squeak of the straining, chafing lashings causing Profit to wonder if there were rats aboard. The remote throb of the engines he could hear, too, and the low rumble of vibration.

Three bells, four bells, five, six—Profit heard the striking of each half-hour, each accompanied with the voices of the lookouts in the bridge-wings passing the hail.

Suddenly he heard something else—a light footfall below Mallow's hammock. It was the noiseless tread of bare feet. But Profit's ears were trained to listening for cats. Lifting his head he made out a squat, heavy-set form crouching below the head-lashing of Mallow's hammock. Profit eyed him, with his left eye, over the gunwale of the hammock. Almost dark though it was, he easily recognized it as the face of that funny one. But there was nothing funny in the gleam of catlike treachery Profit caught in those eyes, when Monk momentarily turned and faced the one dim light in the compartment.

When Monk raised one claw-like hand to the head-lashing of Mallow's hammock Profit saw steel flash. Profit didn't know that with the severing of that lashing his man-god would crash head first to the steel deck. He knew that knives were weapons, having once witnessed a gory affair between two dago fruit venders. Monk held a knife. That was all Profit needed to know. He let out a low growl, then, "*Ruff!*"

Monk slunk away into the darkness forward. Mallow woke up, grumbling thickly.

"Now listen here," he growled in Profit's face. "If you're one of them sleep-howling kyoodles, you better break yourself of the habit pronto! If you don't you're gonna sleep alone!"

Profit didn't deserve it. He knew that. He sniffed disdainfully. And thereafter he didn't rest his snout on Mallow's chest again, but kept that snout uplifted. Nor did he repeat his mistake of growling, when again he heard footfalls and saw a dark form stop below Mallow's hammock.

This time no growl was necessary. It was Jimmy Higgins, the radio operator having the eight to twelve watch, come to wake Mallow who was his relief.

IT CAME like a bomb out of a blue sky.

Profit sat back on his haunches on the desk to Mallow's left, beside the receiving-set. Over on the right side of the desk was the transmitting apparatus.

"Now stay over where you are," Mallow was saying, "and you won't get hurt. I'm goin' to open up and send with full juice, get me, and if you go rompin' over there

while I'm doin' it—" Mallow's voice rose, and he shook a finger toward the oscillation-transformer—"it won't be a little spark-coil jolt like you got yesterday mornin'! It'll make sausage out of you!"

Profit laughed, for Mallow looked funny with the 'phones on. Mallow pushed the remote-control button. This started a direct-current motor, far below on the berth-deck, which ran a 250-volt alternator geared to the same shaft with it. The *Lou* carried a 10-kilowatt outfit. When the sing of induction in the 'phones told him his machine was up to speed, Mallow threw the antenna-transfer switch into sending position. He had a message, which Higgins had turned over, to be sent to the flag-ship, a report of the *Lou's* estimated arrival.

"Stay where you are now!" Mallow cautioned again, the message before him, his finger on the sending-key.

The ghostly glow of one dim, low-wattage lamp shone down on their faces. This globe was shaded so as to concentrate its light downward, prevent it from shining up through the skylight. Which was why Monk Drowser had clear sailing. With the light in his eyes Profit couldn't see him, couldn't see anything up beyond the light. He might have heard Monk crawling through the skylight, had he not been so intent on what Mallow was saying.

Then it happened. Feet first, down came the Monk on Mallow's back as he leaned forward over the desk. The thought flashed to Mallow that the ship had been torpedoed and that it was the overhead bulkhead crashing down upon him. His front teeth chopped off a tiny chunk of his tongue, as he went over, his face crashing down with a terrific thud on the desk, rendering Mallow's whole universe a conglomeration of leaping stars and zigzag streaks of lightning. The next moment he was in black.

One of Mallow's big assets as a fighter was his ability to shake off the effects of a heavy blow. He had never been knocked out, but had often been knocked down. And this was a similar experience. In a very few seconds consciousness came back with a rush. Automatically his fighter's brain formed the complex that he was in the ring and had been knocked down. He would wait for the count of nine.

But he heard no referee's voice counting. All he heard was the growl of a dog. And when he strove to rise to his hands and knees, so as to be ready to spring up and at his man, it smote him that he was being pinned down. Something that felt heavy as an elephant straddled his back. He was choking. Something was digging in at his windpipe.

It was the same story over, only far worse. Dropping down on him thus, as he bent over in the chair, Monk had Mallow at a far greater disadvantage this time than on that former occasion. Heave and squirm as he would, Mallow could not shake him off; nor could he, pry and pull as he would, loosen the clutch of those powerful claws at his throat. The best he could do was to raise his head and shoulders clear of the desk. He felt the ooze of warm blood that flowed from a gash over his right eye and flooded down over his face. Holding that eye closed he rolled the other upward and saw Monk's face.

And then Mallow came to a full realization of what he was grappling with. No petty crook, this, bent merely upon rendering a cop insensible so that he could make a getaway! Mallow read murder in those eyes, in every bulging ridge and muscle of the hideous face above him. He saw it now, the freak of coincidence that had thrown them together again. And with that he saw Monk's game. The Monk was solely and desperately intent upon getting rid of him. He would choke him to insensibility, then carry him aft to the quarter-deck rail and dump him in the sea.

There was no breaking his hold; the fellow had the gripping power of a half-dozen bulldogs' jaws in his hands. When Mallow tried to butt him in the face with the back of his head, Monk ducked, and spat in his ear:

"Yuh can't! I got yuh!"

Mallow was going—fast! There were buzzing noises in his head, and his vision was foggy.

Profit sat there before them, very serious and solemn of face, wondering what manner of game was this. Whatever it was, his man-god was certainly getting the worst of it; he could see that. With his face all gory red, and the 'phones all awry on his head, one on his ear and the other on his chin, Mallow was a fright to look at. Profit wanted to cut loose with a good he-dog growl and a flash of fangs; but he remembered that Mallow had upbraided him for barking an hour before down in their hammock.

Mallow saw just one chance. He couldn't shake this thing off. But he could *jolt him off*. The motor-generator was running. The transmitting apparatus was all in readiness to send, on full power. The oscillation-transformer was five feet to the right of them. To start lightning's first cousin oscillating through that coil, all that was necessary was to press down on the sending key. His idea was to rise up out of the chair, turn his back to the right, back up till he had backed Monk into contact with the coil, then reach out and press the key.

It might kill them both. Mallow didn't know whether it would or not. He had seen fellows "pull jolts" off that circuit—but never when it was charged with full juice. It was a high-voltage circuit. But it was high-frequency current, which, due to its "skin effect," is far less dangerous to human life than current of low frequency even at a much lower voltage. Anyhow it was Mallow's only chance. He couldn't hold out much longer. His lungs felt about to burst.

Slowly, every fiber and bone of him trembling, his blood-smeared face a mass of straining bulges, Mallow rose till he was clear of the chair and stood on his feet. He kicked the chair over backward and shook off the 'phones. Then he turned and backed up till the human ape on his back brought him to a halt by contacting with the oscillation-transformer.

Mallow saw his mistake too late. He should have first put a paper-weight on the sending-key, and then backed Monk into contact with the hot coil. The coil and the key being about five feet apart, Mallow had to bend over the desk and reach far out in order to press down on the key, and in doing that he pulled the human ape on his back clear away from the coil. So that when Mallow pressed down on the key, nothing happened. There was no shock. The quenched spark-gap sang a song of high-frequency discharges, and all the sending circuits from alternator-terminals to antenna were alive with Lightning's first cousin; but Monk wasn't touching—there was about a foot of space between his anatomy and the live coil.

And worse, now Monk was wise. That is, he sensed a trick. He didn't know—exactly. Radio was Chinese to him. But he was quick to perceive that Mallow had backed him up against that coil deliberately; it was design, not chance. And with that Monk caught a foothold under the desk and dug his claws deeper into Mallow's throat.

"Yuh can't!" he exulted again in Mallow's ear. "I got yuh!"

With Monk's two hundred pounds on his back, Mallow was unable to straighten up again. He lay there helpless, frantically trying to expel and inhale through his closed up windpipe, with his left hand vainly pounding on the key. His eyes were filled with blood and he could see nothing. Blind, choking—he was finished. The noise in his head rose to a roaring crescendo, like the rumble of a fast approaching train. In the vain hope that some one would chance to look down the skylight, or some one happen in to the office, he strove on to hold his fluttering consciousness. But consciousness was fast slipping away. Again came that giddy, nauseous sensation of falling. Down, down, lower and lower in the black void Mallow felt himself sinking. Came the thought, "This is it—the end." And with that he once more experienced that queer feeling of having parted company with himself.

PROFIT was now dancing to and fro on the desk like a headless hen. He didn't know what to do, but he did know that he ought to do something. His man-god was bleeding, and was down, with the big gorilla on top of him. Profit realized it was time he took a hand—or better, a fang—in this game. He dodged around Mallow's face, jumped over the antenna-transfer switch, and stood to the right of the struggling pair, with Monk's murder-distorted face, with its mad eyes, its straining cords and bulges and snarling teeth, leering down at him. Their faces were two feet apart. Profit set himself, then leaped up for a nip.

Monk then did something he had never learned to do in this life—nor in many past lives. Monk had learned that trick long, long before, in the far, far bygone days, way back when the world was some millions of years younger. It was a trick of the prehistoric, primitive man's—the man who wore hair instead of clothes, and who had long arms and footlike hands and sharp fangs to fight with. When Profit reached up for that nip he got nipped. Ducking his head to one side, quick as a flash Monk

drove in—*crunch*—and sank his teeth in Profit's shoulder.

And how he held on, that Monk! His was the grip of Dinny O'Hallohan's bulldog, "Shannon"—the latter the boss of the block over Gilligan's Alley way. More than once had Profit watched Shannon lay hold of another dog and just hold on till his squirming, howling victim was in Kingdom Come. And just so did Monk grip him, Profit, now. Nor did Monk for an instant relinquish the grip in his claws round Mallow's neck. Mallow lay there as one dead, one inert hand still across the sending-key.

A mighty good thing it was for Profit and Mallow that Max Mokes' boys had not chopped off Profit's tail—which procedure those youngsters certainly had been seriously debating, about the time old man Mokes booted Profit out. It was that tail of Profit's that saved the day.

It happened in an instant, in a *spoof*. "Duke" Burton, the quartermaster on watch, was the sole witness. Duke had just left the bridge and was on his way aft for a look at the patent log. Halting for a casual look down through the skylight into the radio-office, in the dim glimmer of the light below Duke saw that grisly spectacle: One man astraddle of another on the desk, his hands locked in a strangle hold about the other's neck, and at the same time maintaining a death grip with his jaws at the little dog's neck and shoulder.

Duke had no time to think, to decide on any course of action. The next moment he witnessed an electrical phenomenon. In his frantic efforts to jerk loose from Monk's teeth, Profit stuck his tail out. It touched the oscillation-transformer. And then there was light. A bolt of Lightning's first cousin leaped from the oscillation-transformer to Profit's tail. But it didn't go the way some of Lightning's other, more distant, relatives—those known as Direct Current, or Alternating Current of low frequency—would have gone. That is to say, it did not penetrate and pass through Profit's body, then through Monk's, then Mallow's. This member of the Lightning family—commonly known as "Radio Juice," properly, alternating current of radio frequency, doesn't act that way at all. Starting at Profit's tail, it literally splashed over him, traveled over his skin in leaping streaks of fire. For an infinitesimal moment Profit was suffused in a halo of bluish white and violet. He was a hot dog in all verity, a sizzling, smoking dog.

There was a hiss, a singing hiss, coming from the end of Profit's tail, the point of contact, and with it two howls, one from Monk and one from Profit. A puff of fire flared up in Duke's face. Then he saw that the deadlock below was broken. Monk had just let go, that was all, and changed places; he lay sprawled on deck on his back blinking into his eyes upward as might one who had just dropped from Mars. Profit had executed a like maneuver, with every hair of him aflame leaping to the after bulkhead and then falling to the deck. Already on the threshold of tweet-tweet land, Mallow never knew what had happened; he still lay sprawled across the desk, with his hand on the sending-key.

Thanks to the "skin effect," the tendency to travel on the surface, of that particular member of the Lightning family, none of that trio was killed. When Duke burst into the radio-office he found a hot dog, all right, but a live one. He found the funniest looking dog in the world. Profit was naked. Every hair on him, eyelashes, whiskers and all, was burned off clean, to the root, and from snout to tail-tip he was streaked with welts, or rather long blisters. He was sitting up on his stringy haunches, whimpering with pain and fright, but when Duke entered out came that long tongue in a laugh.

Profit stood up, shook himself, whimpering again, for his welts and blisters hurt all over. One spot on his tail, the spot where his tail had contacted and drawn that arc of white-hot destruction, was more keen with hurt than any other part of him. He bent himself in a bight and essayed to lick that spot. It eluded him. He got mad then and went after the end of that tail in earnest, chasing it round and round, whirling faster and faster. But whirl as he would he failed to overhaul it. He gave up finally, and again sat back on his stringy hams, somewhat giddy in the head now, but still able to laugh as he watched Duke bend over Mallow.

So far as Duke could see, Mallow had drawn only a very small portion of that scattered charge of high-frequency stuff. The major portion of the bolt's energy had been dissipated in overcoming the resistance of Profit's skin and then Monk's; it had to travel over both of them before it

reached Mallow. The end of one shred had streaked from Monk's fingers to Mallow's neck, leaving two reddish veins which forked at his chin, one running straight up the right side of his face, the other ridging below his mouth and then up over his left ear.

Duke picked up the overturned chair, then heaved Mallow over and sat him in it. Mallow's chin sagged down on his chest. Duke bent over him, listened for heart action, heard plenty of it. He took hold of Mallow's wrists and began working them outward and upward, thus to start respiration. But he quickly desisted, for he noted that Mallow's lungs were already commencing to function of themselves. In a few seconds Mallow was gasping and blowing like a horse with heaves. Slowly he lifted his head. His blood-smeared eyes were rolling.

DUKE BURTON'S admiration for Jack Mallow was at its peak in that moment. He had always liked Mallow, as a shipmate, for his clean, big-hearted ways. But what he had always most admired in Mallow was Mallow's gameness under fire, his ability to keep going against a heavy tide, to get up and go some more after being knocked down. Memories of the many ring battles he had seen Mallow in came thronging back to Duke. He harked back to one gala night on the quarter-deck of the fleet flagship, when Mallow had fought the "Mexican Gorilla." Outclassed in weight, strength and reach, as Mallow had been that night, only his masterful ring generalship—his cool, quick-thinking brain, his lightning quickness with his fists, his gliding catlike footwork—had kept him in the ring for those nine killing rounds. But in the ring he still was, and he had his giant antagonist beaten on points. Another round and the decision would be Mallow's. Then had come the moment when the roaring mob hushed. The Mexican had hooked Mallow. Mallow was down!

He lay there in the center of the ring on his back, his eyes closed to the white incandescence of electric lights overhead. At the referee's count of "five" Mallow had lain there as dead as a log. At "six" he had opened his eyes and blinked. At "seven" he stirred and sat up. At "eight" he was on his knees, biting his teeth, his eyes on the Mexican's shoes. At "nine" he was up and at him. And instead of counting "ten," the next moment the referee was bending down over the Mexican, counting, "One—two—three—" And he might have counted to five hundred, for all the Mexican Gorilla knew. He was fast asleep.

Duke turned to face Monk, who was slowly rising to his feet. Monk's face was a spider web of welts. After wreaking its havoc over Profit's hide, that bolt of Lightning's first cousin had leaped to Monk's face by way of his lips and gums and splashed itself all over his head, neck and shoulders, singeing his hair, burning part of the neck of his blue jumper, and leaving him a thing frightful to look at. He rose and stood at a half crouch, his huge talons opening and closing at his sides, his blazing eyes fixed on Duke.

An idea was bubbling in Duke's wily brain. Taking hold of the back of the chair in which Mallow sat, he spun it about, so that Mallow faced the rising Monk. Then bending over, Duke began shouting in Mallow's ear:

"One—two—three—"

At "six" Mallow tossed the cobwebs out of his head. At "seven" he placed his hands on the arms of the chair. His eyes were fixed on Monk's claws, which hung below his knees. At "eight" Mallow bent forward in the chair, setting his feet for a spring.

"Nine!" Duke sang out, and with that Mallow shot up out of the chair and drove in at Monk like a bull at a red rag, with his left fist for a battering-ram. *Smash!* It was two blows to Monk; Mallow's fist, with his moving weight behind it, caught him full on the nose, precipitating a flurry of star clusters, and drove his head backward against the inboard bulkhead, which second crash brought more stars. And while he stood there star gazing, Mallow cut and hooked and jabbed him. It was *zip-zap, zip-zap*. For three minutes Mallow's flying fists rained on him. Blood squirted from Monk's eyes, nose and mouth. He lost teeth. He lost his eyesight.

"Good Lord!" gasped Duke. Never had he seen such a whirlwind of fighting fury. Mallow danced in, delivered a shower of cuts and jabs and hooks, then danced out again. Monk reeled and lunged about like a blind man in ——. He couldn't see to open the door. No matter which way he turned he ran into fists.

And Profit? He forgot every welt and blister on him. It was a he-dog's job keeping out of the way of those two battling young giants—but Profit was all of a he-dog. He danced from one corner to another laughing till he well nigh lost his tongue. Profit was the gladdest dog in the world! Now he *knew* he'd had the right hunch. Mallow *was* big stuff. Like Dinny's bulldog, Shannon, Mallow was a boss. He could throw his fists faster than some of those Gilligan's Alley gutter cats! Profit was so glad—glad because Mallow was his god and not the god of some other dog—that he let out a string of wild *yip-yips*.

Monk went down with a crash, and lay there. Mallow stooped over, with each hand gripped a shoulder, lifted him to his feet—and let go of him. Monk's legs didn't sag; he remained standing.

"You dirty yellow skunk!" Mallow panted. "Stand on your pins, you —— murderer! You can't lay down on me!"

Mallow stepped back. Then he drove in again, his right fist flashing in an overhead arc. To Monk it was like the blow of a sledge-hammer. He didn't lie down this time. He fell like a ton of liver. Only the tips of his fingers quivered.

THE following day there was a heated discussion among the *Lou's* radio heads. That shock was what none of them could understand. That Profit, Monk and Mallow hadn't all been killed seemed beyond reason. A couple of the gang thought, and vaguely hinted, that Mallow was exaggerating slightly as to the amount of power he had been using. But Mallow stoutly and hotly held that up to a few moments before the shock the set had been operating at its full rated capacity of ten kilowatts. He was positive that the alternating-current voltmeter had indicated 250 volts as coming from the alternator below, while the frequency meter showed the current in that circuit to be at 500 cycles. This current went into the primary winding of a step-up transformer; it came off the secondary winding of this transformer at 5000 volts and at radio spark-frequency. And that was the size of the jolt Profit had drawn through his tail from the oscillation-transformer.

"There was a loss, somewhere," remarked Snapper Lesner.

"You're crazy!" Mallow cut him off. "Did you ever see me open up to send to any distance without looking at my radiation!" He pointed to the hot-wire ammeter, mounted on the bulkhead. "The set was radiatin' twenty-seven amps. when I pushed down on the key, just before that bird fell down on me!"

"Then why didn't it kill the three of you?"

"How the —— do I know! It didn't, that's all. But I'm tellin' you there was full juice in that coil. I'm no liar!"

Ensign Whately, who was radio officer, advanced the most plausible theory.

"I think," said he to his gang, "that the hair on your purp's tail prevented his skin from coming in tight contact with the live coil. He almost, but not quite, touched. His skin came close enough to pull a spark from the coil, but not a full charge, probably not one-tenth of a full charge. With your coil charged to full juice, and his tail close to it, why, just a wee bit of your sending current leaked, jumped the fence, we'll say, just like a splash out of a bucket, and arced over to the purp's tail. That's all."

It was enough. Enough to establish Profit in the United States Navy. He was the first animal to win a permanant home on a ship commanded by Bear Blackstone. More, before long he became the Bear's favorite. Profit was the one soul on that ship who could walk into the cabin or out of it, without asking any one's permission, and without being growled at by the Bear. In fact, the old hoary boy always met Profit with a grin. No matter how deeply engrossed with some other matter, old Bear always stooped down and tickled Profit behind his lop-ears, stroked his long head, chuckled deep down in his paunch at those wall-eyes, and spoke to him in the calm, low tones of a human being.

Old Bear Blackstone it was who gave Profit his new name. Bear held that, skin effect of high-frequency current notwithstanding, and also the probability that Profit had drawn but a small portion of the full charge notwithstanding, the resistance of Profit's inner regions must have been high. Wherefore he suggested to Mallow that he call his new shipmate "Ohm"—after the word used to designate the unit of electrical resistance.

And Ohm they called him, from then on—Ohm of the *Rolling Lou*, the wall-eyed one.

The Goodly Company of Adventurers

ST·PATRICK

by Post Sargent

Author of "Captain John Smith," "Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte," etc.

IN THE court of Loigaire, High King of Tara, the chief of the Druids or magicians prophesied: "Adzehead will come, over the mad-crested waves, his cloak hole-head, his staff crook-head, his table in the east of his house; all his household will answer Amen, Amen."

And his words went the rounds of the courts of the six over-kings of Ireland: of Cashel, of Laigin, of Aileach, of Ulaid, of Oriel and of Connaught. The echoes of this cryptic prophecy had scarcely time to reach the kings of the remote tribes, before Patrick the Briton, whose other names were Magonus and Sucat, lately deacon at Auxerre in Gaul, crossed the sea and set foot in the "ultimate land."

For in the year 432, Ireland was far west indeed. A land untouched by the legions of the long-dead Cæsars; unharassed by the nomad hordes in the strange "wandering of the peoples," that even then was harrying Italy, Gaul, Iberia and Britain herself.

Thus for a second time, and after a lapse of many years, Patrick came to Ireland. And when the dwellers by the river Dee beheld the outlander's tonsured head, his bishop's staff, and vestments, the strange altar rites, and heard the prayers of priest and responses of congregation, then they knew that the prophecy of the chief Druid was fulfilled.

With only a short wait near the mouth of the Dee, Bishop Patrick's boat stood to the north through the Irish Sea. On a tiny dot of land, one of the island group known anciently as the Children of Cor, legend finds Patrick's footstep; today the dot is known as Inis Patrick—Patrick's Isle.

Near Brene Strait, at the entrance to Loch Cuan,* one Dichu came down from his castle on the hill, prepared to slay the stranger. Dichu remained to pray. Leaving his boat in the keeping of this, his first convert, the good bishop set out on foot through the wild country of the Picts. And so he came to Mount Miss.

Patrick the bishop, Patrick the missionary, was fired with holy zeal to convert the wild tribes to the Christian faith—to destroy the power of the Druids. What Cæsar had not attempted, what had never entered the minds of Attila or Alaric, this Patrick the Briton essayed without other weapon than faith.†

*Now Lake Strangford.

†It must not be thought, however, that early proselyting Christianity was a flame of pure-burning philosophy, innocent of the guttering and smoke of the beliefs of its pagan foes. To be a militant Christian was to adventure with weapons of exorcism against real powers of sorcery and demonology.

The *Lorica*, famous Irish incantation attributed to the quill of St. Patrick, is a case in point. Besides the "might of heaven," it invokes the "brightness of sun, brilliance of moon, splendor of fire, swiftness of wind, depth of sea" against "incantations of false prophets, black laws of paganism, spells of women and smiths and Druids, against all knowledge prohibited to the human soul."

But Patrick had first a debt to pay. Before him rose in retrospect the shadow of the great adventure of his youth. An adventure that had turned the ignorant British lad toward a bishopric; that was to make him saint.

A debt to pay. The unpaid price of freedom from bondage, the redemption money of one who escapes from the bonds of physical slavery, but not those of a simple conscience.

And so, gold in hand, Patrick stood in the shadow of Mount Miss and looked with emotion toward his goal—the stronghold of the kingling Miliucc. In a few short hours he would bridge the gap of twenty-five years and face his master once more with unburdened conscience.

But now—so runs the tale—as Patrick gazed toward the distant castle of Miliucc, the sky was of a sudden shot with light and flames rushed heavenward with furious clouds of smoke.*

Miliucc had escaped by suicide his own baseless fears. Forewarned of the coming of Patrick, he had imitated that powerful Lydian monarch, Crœsus, who, a thousand years before, had sacrificed himself on a funeral pyre, rather than submit to the conquering might of Cyrus.

Whether he feared an active vengeance on the part of Patrick—or whether he took this manner of protesting against the resistless power of the new and mysterious God foretold by the Druids — at all events Miliucc destroyed himself. Gathering about him his goods, he locked his gates and, setting fire to his castle, thus perished in the flames.

Thus was the good Patrick cheated of the opportunity to make amends. Now as he went forward and looked upon the smoking ruins, the past descended upon him again; memories of his distant youth when his narrow world seemed a vast cauldron seething with malign spirits, whose joy was in human sufferings and human dread. Youthful years of nightmare alarms.

HIS father Calpurnius was a Briton, a Roman citizen, a small landholder by the western shore of Britain, in the year 389 of the Christian era. So little Patricius, too, was born a freeman and a Roman citizen, accustomed from his cradle to regard Rome as the mighty bulwark of the world. And were it a Cæsar, or a Caligula, or a Nero who wore the purple, it was to the name of Rome that the peaceful folk of Britain clung in those terrible days of world chaos. Rome was the symbol of civilization and peace; no more terrible disaster could be imagined than to be sundered from Rome.

But the great Theodosius died and his royal mantle fell upon weak shoulders. Greece already shuddered beneath the tread of the hordes of the barbarian Alaric. Then Rome trembled too when Alaric thundered at her gates. Britain felt the mother tremble and went faint with fear, for the legions of Rome were recalled to the city's defense.

In Italy, Alaric the Goth smiled and hammered only the harder at the gates of the Holy City. In Britain, Roman colonist and Briton wrung their hands, though some felt glee at the near approach of the "good old times." There was one who gloated and—struck.

Niall, then High King of Ireland, was no friend to Rome, for Rome had been a faithful shepherd of her island flock. And Niall was a wolf. Such a wolf, indeed, for harryings and rapine, that vain Keltic legend vaunts him as chevying Gaul and ravaging it as far as the Alps.

So Niall grew bolder and Britain suffered.

The day came, after Patricius, son of Calpurnius, had turned sixteen, when a fleet of fierce Irish freebooters sailed down the western coast of Britain, plundering and burning and enslaving and killing. And they came to the farmstead of Calpurnius which was a place of peace and plenty. Fat cattle grazed in the meadows; hay was stacked in abundant cocks; the little granary was bursting with the harvest; the strong walls and new thatch of the farmhouse bespoke thrift and prosperity, perhaps some store of gold.

The eyes of Niall glistened with greed. At his order the fleet drew quietly to shore. Before the family and servants of Calpurnius were aware of their approach, the farmstead was surrounded by the wild crew. The storehouses and farmhouse were looted, the fat cattle slaughtered and dressed for food, the thatched roofs set ablaze. All the peace and prosperity was reduced to a scene of carnage and blackened desolation. In the tumult Calpurnius and

* Dr. W. Stokes, in his "Book of Lismore," accepts this account as literal truth.

his wife managed in some manner to escape, but the old men-servants and maid-servants were butchered, only the young men and maidens being spared to become slaves.

The lad Patrick, the future saint of Ireland, was led dazed to the boats and thrown aboard. Then began for him a life he had never dreamed of in the peace and shelter of his home. But such is the adaptability of youth that his spirit soon recovered from the nightmare horrors of the foray. Adventure, even unwilled, is still adventure, and never fails to strike a spark from a young and courageous heart. So Patrick, rustic, unlettered, cut sharply off from a Rome-filled world, set his face bravely to the unknown perils that awaited him in "the ultimate places of the earth." For to his mind all outside the fringe of the Empire was in darkness. Wild Ireland, the entrance gates to hell.

The men of Connaught were in need of slaves, and to this market Patrick was led as soon as the boats had touched the Irish shores. Near Fochlad Wood, close to Crochan Aigli—to be known as Croagh Patrick or Mount Patrick—the lad found a master. A bleak and desolate land that stretched from Mayo to the western promontory of Murrisk. And here Patrick slaved until he was sold to Miliucc, whose home was far off in the kingdom of Ulidia.

From swineherd to saint. For six years Patrick herded the pig-droves of Miliucc on the slopes of Sliabh Miss—Slemish or Mount Miss—in storm and fine weather. His home the forest; for companions the swine; his roof the stars or the storm-tossed clouds. And nothing in nature half so wild as the wild Gaels and Picts who were his masters.

The bondboy began to think deeply, as St. Paul and St. Augustine were led to think in the midst of their adventures. Free, Patrick had prayed little; homesick and a thrall among strangers, he longed and hoped and prayed for deliverance. And a voice, he says, came to him one night as he knelt in prayer in the snow.

"Thou doest well to fast; thou shalt soon return to thy native land."

And again the voice spoke—

"Behold, thy ship is ready!"

The boy took these dream-messages as divine responses, and made preparations to escape. He knew nothing of the world outside; nothing of geography. Only the local scenes on Mount Miss and in the valley of the Braid. But he did know vaguely that the sea lay due east. The sun would be his guide over the several hundred miles of rough land and tangled wilderness that stretched from Miliucc's stronghold to where a ship might be found.

One early morning the swine missed their keeper and roamed the forest without hindrance. Over toward the rising sun Patrick was hastening, stout staff in hand, his whole worldly goods in a little bundle on his back. A few hard cakes, a dried fish, a handful of acorns were his rations for the flight.

Behind him Miliucc would sooner or later mark his absence, and the hue and cry would be raised after him. Before him lay dangers from the known—packs of fierce Irish wolf-hounds that guarded the scattered farms of savage masters. Perils from the unknown—the spirit-shapes, the shadow-ghouls, the rock- and tree- and earth-goblins that were so real to all men of the fifth century.

But a light greater than that of the sun seemed to guide Patrick's steps; and a power greater than his staff seemed to ward off dangers as he marched or slept; and a food more nourishing than acorns seemed to give constant energy to his sturdy body. A divine force? Faith? Will? Or the same driving urge to adventuring that made David and Æneas and Ulysses greater than their own forces? But Patrick had not heard of these, and ascribed his strength only to prayer. For he escaped all dangers, and reached the port of Inverdea, where a little stream meets the sea. Anchored in the estuary and about to set sail was the ship of his dream-messages.

Patrick lost no time in offering his services to the captain of the little bark, but at first the latter looked on him with suspicion and replied—

"Nay, in no wise shalt thou come with us."

So Patrick turned sadly away, thinking that with this delay the people of Miliucc would soon overtake him. But as he walked back into the little town, one of the sailors came running after him.

"Come quickly, for they are calling you. Our captain has once more considered, and will take you with us."

THUS Patrick left Ireland, though he carried away with him, unknown to him then, a great purpose to make of this emerald of the sea a jewel in the crown of the Christ he worshipped. And in his under-consciousness was the honest regret that Miliucc had been defrauded of his purchase price.

Three days Patrick sailed with the crew and captain of this trading boat and, on the fourth, they landed on the coast of Gaul.

Strange cargo. Some scores of Irish wolf-hounds for the fairs and markets of southern Gaul and Italy, where they would bring high prices.

Landing on the coast south of Nantes, the traders, aided by Patrick, drove their leashed dog-packs before them on one of the most remarkable journeys ever recorded. Their way lay across the southern part of Gaul, even then and for centuries past famed for its teeming life; destined to become a fair garden spot of future France.

Yet in this land, as they first journeyed east for twenty days, Patrick found only a "desert." Their food ran out and starvation threatened them. Many of their dogs dropped from hunger and were abandoned by the wayside.

Walled cities abandoned, strong castles deserted, lonely villas in the hills, evidences of trade and industry, even caves once inhabited, they found in plenty. But of bread not even a moldering crust; of growing crops not a stalk; of fowl or beast not a trace; of living beings not a soul. Weeds grew in gardens and over paved roads, and filled the moats of the castles.

A dead world, a lusty young civilization from which the soul had passed, leaving only the gaunt, frightful shell. A silent desolation more mournful than death.

Pestilence? No, the recurring plagues that swept away whole populations left food and animals and growing things behind. Some awful power of enchantment and hellish magic? King Arthur and the magician Merlin had not yet come, but the childlike, superstitious, fear-haunted minds, that were soon to create Merlin and his mighty magic, could well conceive of baleful spells and demoniac forces as the author of this work of doom.

Ah! to Patrick was given one of the greatest adventures that history records! To be perhaps the sole mortal in that awful age to chronicle, even dazedly, a journey of a hundred leagues amid the vast and mute remains of another Atlantis. To grow gaunt in a fertile land over which a plague of monstrous, devouring locusts had lately passed.

And these locusts?

Alaric had just sacked Rome, in 410. Then Alaric died. The German tribes, pressed on the east by the Huns, poured into Gaul. Wave upon wave of Vandals and Sueves engulfed the country, then flowed over the Pyrenees into Spain. Hot on their heels came a new invasion, the wild hordes of the Visigoths, blotting out all life and means of subsistence in their path. Reaching out their tentacles as they passed, they sucked the life from cities and towns and mountain castles, and even from the hidden hill caves where the last remnants of the population had taken shelter against the vandals.

And shortly after they had passed, Patrick and the traders and their dog-packs came. They found a "desert," and wondered, and starved. For nine days more they journeyed, now keeping to the hills, terrified lest they should meet the monstrous cause of this blight. In the last stages of starvation their lives were saved by a drove of pigs that appeared on the road. Many of these they killed and, resting on the spot two nights, feasted and filled their wallets with dried meats for the remainder of the journey. Then they continued their way, finally reaching the Mediterranean; thence to Italy, where Patrick took leave of his companions.

Now it chanced that Patrick, before returning home to Britain, took refuge for a time in a monastery off the coast of Provence, and there he was brought under the spell of the monastic ideal. Back at last in Britain he found his parents dead. Content, it seems, to rest in peace from his adventures, he was recalled to active life by another of his dream-messages. This time he heard the "voice of the Irish."

"We pray thee, holy youth, to come and again walk amongst us as before."

Feeling unfit by education and training for the missionary task, he took the great resolution to return to Gaul and prepare himself for the labor of Christianizing Ireland. And in the church at Auxerre Patrick studied diligently for a score of

years and was finally consecrated bishop and assigned to the church of Ireland. And it was his thought to commence his ministry by visiting Miliucc and paying him the purchase money lost by Patrick's escape.

PATRICK looked long at the smoking ruins of Miliucc's stronghold, then turned sadly away. His adventures were done. Yet new adventures, had he known it, were before him, but these were to be of the spirit. Labors long and wearisome; much of journeying and preaching in this savage land; much struggle with the old religion. Until at last King Loigaire and the other kings and the people learned that his ways were better than the ways of the Druids. Then Patrick made permanent his Church in Ireland.

In old age Patrick retired and wrote his *Confession*. Not to Rome, or Auxerre, or even to his old home in Britain. But to the kingdom of Dalaradia, hard by the spot where Dichu had come down from his castle to kill Patrick; not far from where the good bishop had known the bitter life of bondage and started on his great adventure. And when he died in 461, he was buried at the barn of Dichu.

DECISIVE BUNKER HILL BATTLE

by Hugh Pendexter

CREASY in his "Decisive Battles of the War" names that of Saratoga as the deciding conflict of the Revolutionary War. This, because the surrender of Burgoyne was sufficent to impel France to recognize the new republic.

Washington, however, was quick to recognize the supreme importance of the Battle of Bunker Hill and considered it the decisive engagement of the entire war. The result of this battle so deeply impressed Howe and Clinton that thereafter they did not lead their troops against entrenched Provincials. In one company of the British every man was killed or wounded.

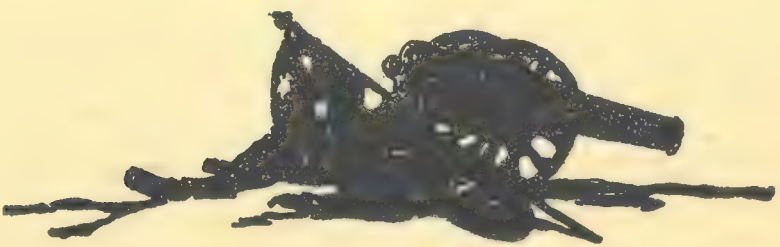
In a private letter to Lord Rochford, Burgoyne says in part—

"All the wounds of the officers were not received from the enemy."

It was Burgoyne, stationed with a battery on Copp's Hill, who set Charlestown to blazing with red-hot shot.

General Greene, writing from the Roxbury camp the day after the battle, speaks of the third repulse, and says: "It is thought they (the British) would have gone off, but some of the Provincials imprudently called out to their officers that their powder was gone. The Regulars heard it, turned about, charged their bayonets, and forced the entrenchments."

Perhaps it is idle to speculate as to the outcome of this, the first battle, had the Provincials kept mum about the shortage of powder; but it is human nature to speculate, nevertheless.



The NEW KIND OF SPORT

by Raymond S. Spears

Author of "The Phantom Ranger," "The Were-Cougar," etc.

SID COLE drifted into the cow-town of Drycup, scuffled along the sidewalks of concrete, boards, cinders, gravel and sundry dirts until he came to the big brass-painted repeating-rifle sign, twelve feet high, of the famous hardware and sporting goods store of the Maltby Brothers, and known through a dozen adjacent States as the place where one was apt to learn the whereabouts of interesting or notorious, though vagrant he-men of the wilder places. Cole was just a young fellow, rather dusty, weather-worn and thin. He differed from most desert tramps in that he carried a Down East green-timber leather pack with a quiver of arrows on each side and in his hand he held a slender long-bow with a loosened string.

For a time he stood in the glimmering glare of the sun's midday rays. He gazed along the trail which extended from the short, dusty street far into the mountain range straight westward across the desert. A wind was drifting southward across the highway ahead, and every few seconds a swirl of dust swept across the two ruts out in the diminishing perspective—the unceasing march of the beautiful and treacherous whirlwind "Sand Maidens." The spectacle determined Cole that here was a place he'd better stop at before he undertook to go on into the inviting heights of the enormous ridge which loomed beyond this valley, a timber belt dark across the range; it was perhaps ten or fifty or eighty miles distant; one could not guess in this land where the eyes tell a different tale every day, never the whole truth.

Accordingly, the wayfarer entered the Maltby Brothers' store where he was pleased to see sitting on sundry chairs and benches at the back, among work-benches, desks and junk, a group of the real Westerners he had journeyed far to see and admire. Wide hats, silken neckerchiefs, lean, bony faces wind-reddened or smooth-browned, and slowly working jaws or dangling cigarets were typical. The workman reached for a gum-drop and placidly nodded to the stranger.

"Mr. Maltby?" Cole inquired.

"Yes. One of 'em."

"My name is Cole. Fellow name of Harry Scott told me over on the Arkansaw River that if I came through Drycup probably you could tell me if there was any work around here for me."

"Harry Scott, eh? What's he doing over there?"

"Riding east in a flivver. We camped in some cottonwoods below Junta—" (he called it "Hony".)

"You a lunger?"

"No, sir. Nothing the matter with me, but being broke."

"What's that blamed things you got there?"

"Bow."

"Y'don't look like an Injun."

"I'm not."

"What you doing."

"Taking a walk."

"Where from?"

"Syracuse."

"Kansas?"

"Nope—New York."

"Walk all the way?"

"Oh, not more'n half it."

"Huh!" Maltby chewed reflectively on the gum-drop, "You say your lungs, heart, stomach, liver an' so on's all right?"

"Oh, yes!"

"What ails you is your head—walking from N'York?"

A burst of guffaws approved the wit. Cole grinned. If he had ever known the time people hadn't doubted his intelligence, he had left it behind when he strolled westward.

"Kids 'round here play with bow'narrers," Maltby grinned.

"I noticed how bright the children seem to be," Cole remarked imperturbably. "I s'pose the climate stunts their minds, though, before they get their growth."

"Well, say, by gad you got yer nerve talkin' thataway!" a red-haired and freckled-faced cowboy lounging against the counter suddenly broke in, bristling.

Cole turned and looked at him with a casual sweep of his glance. The grins on the faces of the onlookers froze instantly. It really wasn't healthy for an Easterner to give any of these rough and ready, especially ready, desert natives any of his lip.

Cole shrugged his shoulders, turning back to Maltby.

"Scott said you were one of the best fellows he ever met, Mr. Maltby, but he said, too, that if there was any one thing people around here admired it was anybody with brains enough to mind his own business, and not butt in on such questions as prohibition, private affairs, local rumpuses, party politics and personal tastes. These arrows and this bow are my own affair. All I asked was if I could get a job around here, that you know of. It's none of my business whether you drink whisky or get your alcohol by eating candy."

"Ain't no need of sunfishing a bit," Maltby declared frankly, "My brother's gone and got married. Do you know the dif'rence between a .22 Special and a .41 Russian?"

"Oh, yes! And a .30-0 and a .32 Special, too."

"All right, light down that pack of yourn, stick that double-ended fish pole into the corner and if you see a short feller with long whiskers, two guns and red lips his hair's afraid of, go wait on him, *pronto*. He rid into Drycup 'bout two hours ago. If you c'n sell him what he wants without his namin' 'em, you'll do. His name's Lobo Ike Vandlar."

Cole eased his pack into the corner, stood his bow behind it and went to the five-gallon bottle to drink spring water from the mountains toward which he had been heading. Then he went outside and washed his head, hair and all. While he was gone Maltby urged the red-head cowboy to give the newcomer a chance to get his bearings.

The request didn't fit very well, but with all the eyes of the crowd on him, the rather smart and surly cowboy-rancher acquiesced with doubting grace. Cole came in from the cistern-tank tap well refreshed. Just when he would have quietly joined the group sitting around, a pounding on the front porch plank betokened the coming of heavy feet. A wide human figure filled the front doorway and a whooping yell funneled down the length of the store.

"Hi-i!" the customer shouted, "C'm'ere!"

Sid Cole swung at a light-footed gait along the floor.

"What can I do for you?" the new clerk inquired.

"Eh? What kin you do for Lobo Ike, eh—that the ijee?"

"If it isn't, what can you do for us, then?" Cole inquired.

"Well, I'll be jiggered—who the Hades air you?"

"Punky Sid from the Montezuma Marshes!" the clerk replied, adding, "At your service."

"Well, dog-gone! You know, by ——! I be'n bit by most all the bugs an' snakes they is, an' I jes' plumb hain't thought of punkies, senct I pulled out'n the Adrondacks—Punk Sid—Whoe-e-e-e-e! That sounds like back home, it do! Whoe-e-e-e-e! Well, dog-gone my worm-eaten rawhide! Say—I wanna get fourteen pounds o' Double-B's fer these yere pea-shoots of mine, an' ten dozen 'riginal pencil munitions f'r my long gun—"

COLE went to the shelves of ammunition and handed down ten boxes of .45-standards for revolvers and six twenty-round boxes of .30-o's. Lobo Ike swept the order with his gaze and beamed with satisfaction and profanity, as he handed the clerk a twenty-dollar bill stripped from an enormous roll of currency.

"I-kod!" the customer shouted back at Maltby, "So now ye've gotter feller 'at understands he-langwidge, ain't ye!"

"I imported him special for you, Lobo!" Maltby grinned.

"That's fine— What's yer name, sonny?"

"Punky Sid—Cole."

"Well now—dog-gawn! One of them Coles, eh? Know'm up West Crick?"

"Perry? Delos?" Sid inquired.

"Hi-i-i-i!" Lobo shouted, and went into a long staccato series of wolf yelps, "Listen—Perry Cole—Delos Cole—Whoe-e-e-e! How be them green timber boys o' the hills, any how? Hi-i-i!"

And with that the boisterous old fellow dragged the clerk to a corner and for an hour filled the store with growls, whoops, exclamations and the reverberations of his satisfaction and approval.

"Now I-kod, Maltby!" Lobo Ike at last declared, "I want this boy t'come out to my place nex' Sunday, unnerstand? I wanna talk to him, see? I-kod I do—don' yo' fergit, nuther!"

"All right, Lobo! I'll bring 'im out, if I have to round 'im up with a posse."

"Thataway!" the big fellow roared, and having approved the wrapping of the bundle of ammunition, in a piece of burlap and a handle of heavy cord, he shambled forth on his way, grumbling and muttering like a comfortable and peaceable old range bull on his way to a water-hole.

Other customers came in, and Cole waited on these. It was clear that this was not his first experience in a store. He knew kronk pliers, Chautauqua wrenches, saw blades and nail sizes. And when night fell, with the store vacant and the thoroughfare quiet, Maltby invited Cole to sit down a minute, so they could talk.

"That red-headed rancher's bad," Maltby remarked. "He's killed two men and would like to run loose thataway. I shouldn't say anything about it, for we can hold him, ordinarily. He isn't getting any more popular, but when Lobo Ike came along he let you in for a lot more'n any of us bargained."

"Yes?" Cole inquired, curiously.

"Lobo Ike is a rancher. He lives up north of us in that range of dark hills, which probably you noticed. He's richer'n free-milling gold, and that ain't all, as regards you'n this skunk, Snip Dayfuss. Snip's ornery, anyhow. He thinks it's fun hellin' around. But Lobo's got a daughter, name of Sophia, who's cayenne f'r spice 'n purty—My Gawd! She's just painful to look at, that's how handsome she is. At the same time she ain't one of those ladies you wink at, if you value your life. Snip he's friendly with her, in kind of a fashion. Not intimate, you understand, but just so he c'n dance with her, come a party, and then figure how much better off he'd be if some other galoot hadn't horned in f'r the next set. Lobo Ike invitin' you out there, an' not noticin' Snip a-tall. Well, if you got them brains with you now, you understand what I'm driving at."

"Well, seeing as I never saw Miss Sophia, and probably she'd despise me for ornery, and likely the big fellow'll swat me for a punky, taking a notion to, I don't expect Snip'll need to worry much."

"I just gave you fair warning," Maltby explained, "I don't want to lose you before my brother comes back—tha's all."

"I'll try to stick around," Cole grinned.

"C'mon, an' we'll go eat. Never thought probably you might need a snack."

"That's all right—if they feed good tonight," Cole replied.

"When'd you eat last?"

"This morning, come daylight—but I had lots of it, then."

"All day with nothing to eat? Well, dad-blast my inhospitable hide!"

Sometimes during the following days, when customers arrived in the store early in the morning, before Maltby came down, or when it happened no visitors were in the place, chance arrivals found Sid Cole with the bow in his hand, and perhaps arrows quivering in a board at the other end of the store, but he disclaimed any exhibition temperament, evaded the suggestions that it'd be fun to see him shoot, and shed the jeering and taunting of all hands with grace and good nature. He was a bit sensitive and independent, after the manner of his kind.

On Sunday morning, at seven o'clock,

Maltby backed a big car out of his garage and headed for Lobo Ike's ranch, twenty miles north of town in the Thistle mountains. The way was rough, but in a little over an hour the machine was coming to a stop on the knob-spur where stood a bungalow some sixty feet long, with an enormous green roof overhanging on all sides, shadows, porches and a foundation six feet high.

"'F I hadn't seen your smoke," Lobo ambled out to greet the visitors, "I'd be'n half-way to Drycup wonderin' why'n Hades you hadn't started? Aw-right, though! I gotta dad-blamed cougar back'n these junipers an' some dogs to rout 'm with. We'll get thar, d'rectly—if y'ain't got yer fav'rite guns in, on the rack's a few—"

"Now that's too bad," Maltby turned to Cole, with twinkling malice, "You know, I meant to tell you to bring your bow'n arrows, Lobo—"

"*What!*" Lobo Ike bellowed, "Bow'narrers? Whatche giv'n me?"

"Tha's right, Lobo! Mr. Cole here's a bow'n arrow hunter!"

"Well dawg-*goned!*" Lobo bellowed, "Dad-wham! An' you're one of them pin-cushion sports, eh? Whoe-e-e-e-e! That's rich! Hi-i-i, Sophi-i-i! Sophe-e-e-e! Where's that tarnation gal o' mine! Time she was here, an' I wan-na tell 'er I brung something new 'n her 'sperience—a pincushion sport! Who-e-e-e-e! Sophe-e-e-e-e!"

Coloring, Cole rolled his eyes at Maltby, who was with the gravest of expressions regarding the embarrassment and confusion of his victim. And at that moment Sophia ran brightly into the scene, reducing the sunlight to a mere fixture in the landscape.

"Here I am!" she announced, girlishly, and nodded delightfully at Maltby, who bowed. Then she gravely transfixed Sid Cole with her appraising and puzzled gaze, "And is this the—"

"Yep!" Lobo Ike declared, "The 'riginal pin-cushion sport— But—dog-gone! He ain't got his stick'ems with him!"

"Too bad!" she smiled, pleased by the nervous surprize and blush of the stranger, and when Maltby formally made the introduction she nodded brightly.

"So glad to meet you, Mr. Pin-Cushion!" she laughed, adding, "Do you ride?"

"Very little," he shook his head, "No—"

"Well, probably you'll make up for it today, if Dad has his way."

Now that was a real prophesy. Sid Cole had never been in a saddle on horseback, but he had sat bicycles for thirty thousand miles and motorcycles for a good hundred thousand. He was put aboard a lank, experienced cutting pony who had outgrown her rambunctiousness and knew a green rider, treating him with apparent horse-sense and sympathy.

They rode up a cañon; they climbed to a bench against a mesa; they circled the rim of a lava bed, and they jumped a cougar up against the face of a crumbling mountain. Then followed two hours of scramble, race and yelping which ended when a snarling beast up a twisted cedar tree defied a dozen frantic dogs—but fell in rigor of death as a pencil-sized .30-30 soft-nose slapped through his head and tore a hole at the back of his skull.

MORE carefully, the hunters returned down the steeps and followed the unimaginable pasture paths back into the outfit grounds. Lobo Ike, with the hide dangling over his saddle pommel, loomed huge and wide on a great horse like a draft animal in size but agile in a lumbering, ground-pawing way. Maltby rode with the rancher, which threw Sid Cole in with Sophia Vandlar, who talked of birds and scenery, books and flowers, and listened when she had Cole going about his adventures on his western wanderings.

"How did you come to start on foot?" she asked. "Expect people to give you a ride?"

"No. I didn't want them to give me a ride," he shook his head. "If I wouldn't buy my own car and pay for my own gasoline, I certainly couldn't expect others to supply them for me."

"Then you really liked the walk?"

"I had a wonderful trip!" he laughed. "I started a year ago. I went along the Great Lakes, in a rowboat. I came down the Drainage Canal out of Chicago into the Illinois. Then I sold out and crossed Missouri on foot, through the Ozarks. I'd had side trips, all along."

"And you earned—paid your way?"

"Oh, yes!"

"But that's really a joke—about the bow and arrows?"

"Of course—it seems to be!" he nodded uncomfortably.

"You don't talk about it?"

"Talk is very inexpensive," he replied.

"Yes—I know. When we arrive at the ranch we'll find how cheap it is," she said, not looking at him, yet with a certain gravity in her tone, "Only don't make any mistake about it. Some men can talk and do—both, you know."

"Depends on training," Cole suggested.

"Yes—and character."

Snip Dayfuss was at the ranch when the cougar hunters rode down about 1:30 o'clock. He had come out in a dusty and damaged flivver. He greeted Lobo and Maltby, then turned to Sophia to take care of her horse. He pointedly ignored Cole, except to give him a look as direct and challenging as the unwinking glare of a huddled rattlesnake. A glance of interpretation by Maltby let the girl know the two had met. When Snip rode her horse to throw it into the alfalfa she made it a point to stop Cole from going with her father and Maltby into the house—but let him leave before Snip joined her.

And when the lame cook served such a dinner as would appeal to a ranchman as huge as Lobo Ike, Sophia sat at the end of the table with the ranch foreman on her right and Maltby on her left, and the others scattering along. But the situation was bad, at the best. Snip Dayfuss was insistent, grim, his face as hard as a weather beaten knotty fence-post.

"I sold six hundred head of three-year-olds," he told Lobo Ike and the others indirectly. "Twenty-six, thirty, which lets me out, nice. Took over that water-hole down b'low my place—"

"You mean that Chicago sick man's water-hole?" Sophia asked, quickly, and sharply. "How come he sold?"

"He sold, fast enough," Snip grinned. "I made him an offer, and he took 't, course. That'll take care of my lower pasture, a'right."

Silence fell along the table. Every one, even the newcomer Cole, understood that Snip Dayfuss, a cowboy of a few years before, had added a lunger's homestead to an expanding ranch—as soon as it had been proved up.

"I hadn't heard that," Lobo Ike remarked, after a time. "Seems like you're coming fast, Dayfuss."

"You bet I am!" the red-head laughed, wolfing a chunk of roast beef, "Me—I trade. I keep my stock moving. 'F I like a brand, I buy it. 'F I want land, I get it. I know cattle; I know land—if anybody don't know me, he learns—*if in time*, he's sure playing in luck."

He turned his grass-green eyes to stare at Sid Cole, who met the bulging look with curiosity and steadiness. Here was no veiling of the fellow's hostility. No politeness, no decency of reserve, no truce at the table of a neighbor restrained the gaunt, hard and implacable cattleman who had resented the stranger from the first glance. Dayfuss had thrown forth his challenge, his warning—and all the spectators held an expectant hesitancy as they waited to see how the new hardware clerk would stand up to it.

"It often pays to know the other fellow at least as well as yourself," Cole suggested. "I've noticed in my own experience it usually happens that good nature and expecting fair treatment seldom fails—except when one is up against utterly unscrupulous greed and ignorance unashamed."

"Phew!" Lobo Ike gasped, the only one who made a sound.

Cole added:

"You see, Snip, the only people who don't play fair are those who are cowards, afraid somebody else will get the jump on them. Personally, I've never had to impose on any one. My luck has been constant—I mind my own affairs. And I don't find it necessary to look for trouble with any one. Suppose you tell us here what you've got against me to act as though I was trying to put something over on you? You started it down in the gun store at Drycup, trying to make fun of me. Suppose you tell your friends, here, why you are trying to bulldoze a stranger who hasn't been in this country a week?"

Dayfuss froze as he stretched up, his lean figure taut. He had never been talked to that way before. He glared, yet hesitated. This was his move, now, yet he was baffled, angered beyond all precedent but left without excuse for action or keeping still.

"I think Mr. Cole is perfectly right, Mr. Dayfuss," Sophia Vandlar commented quietly. "If you can't be friendly with the people you find at this table, the proper thing for you to do is stay away."

"Yes, that's so, Snip," the voice of Lobo Ike boomed. "Cole's a friend of mine, comes from my own country back East.

You're welcome here, you know that. But suppose you quiet down with your nose in the feed bag—or ride?"

"Aw—I didn't mean nothing!" Snip suddenly blurted out, his face red down to his collar. "If people don't like me they can lump me!"

"Just behave yourself. That's all!" Sophia said quietly, adding, "I b'lieve that cook's made a surprize for us. Something sweet!"

And huge chunks of vanilla sponge cake swimming in bowls of vanilla sweet-sauce with marshmallow frosting confirmed her suspicions. But though the people sat around and listened to the radio and talking-machine music for three or four hours, when Maltby and Cole headed away for Drycup in the flaming colors of sunset, the hardware man, as soon as he was out of hearing from the ranch, said seriously:

"Snip's bad, my boy. You called him, held him with your voice, and one man failed to do that who had him covered with a gun. Snip crawfished on him, snatched the gun and sent the fellow to a hospital for two months. He won't rest, now, till he's crippled or killed you."

"You'll swear to that—if I need your testimony?" Cole asked.

"*What?*" Maltby exclaimed, "But—he's hard, I tell you. You haven't a show in the world against him!"

Cole made no comment. He could go away, and —— himself forever as a coward; he could stay and take the consequences. He had come, as countless strangers have, with friendly interest and lively curiosity—only to find himself face to face with a shameless bully in a broad and beautiful land.

ON MONDAY morning Cole was at work in the hardware store, as on previous days. That afternoon some local people came in to sit around, talking. A sheep-owner walked in and ordered four thousand tag markers for his flocks. A homesteader bought three hundred feet of water-pipe. A cowboy bought forty-six feet of Alps mountain-rope to try it for a lariat—one of Maltby's experimental buys.

By Wednesday every one had heard some version of the affair out at Lobo Ike's ranch. No two stories were alike. Every one awakened the curiosity and surprize of the listener. The word went around that Snip Dayfuss was riding a stranger, and had been badly thrown for his pains.

"Now's his chance to gentle 'im right," somebody said, but without indicating exactly for whom that abbreviated pronoun, "'im" stood.

Two weeks, a month went by. Drycup sat tense. Just so the emotions of the humans presaged the coming of meanness. Everybody knew trouble was drawing near, yet whose business was it? Sid Cole came and went on store errands. He waited on customers, and Maltby said to him, within four days of the visit at Lobo Ike's:

"Just you he'p yourself to any gun you happen to need—and all the ammunition you need for practise. That is, if you're really going to stay."

"Thank you—I've a short gun in my pack," Cole replied, "But I'd take it kindly if I could use the car early mornings."

"Sure—sure as you're born!"

And so at false dawn, every morning, Sid Cole was out in the rough country four miles east on the main trail. He was back in the store, opening it at a few minutes before eight o'clock. What he did, what he had on his mind he did not tell any one.

Snip Dayfuss traded by proxy in Drycup. His foreman came to town, usually with one or two cowboys. And one day the foreman told "Goldfish" Hank at the garage that Snip was feeling his salt and raring to go. Maltby brought the word to Cole.

"Well, I'm afraid you're in for it—if you don't leave go," the merchant said, "Snip's figuring on his move, you know. When he makes up his mind, he won't linger none in his own dust. To tell the truth, I don't see what you've got. If he kills you, you understand, you're just a clerk in a store, and he's a rich rancher."

"Is there anybody—I don't know just how to say it—but somebody to go down there and hear him talk—spread it around?" Cole asked.

"Why—um-m— Leave it to me."

Three days later Maltby came from the bank to Cole, direct.

"You know Colby Bronner's a friend of mine. He's appraiser for our bank. He went down to Dayfuss yesterday morning, sizing up the cattle and the way the feeds is. Well, Snip's talking aplenty. He's told all his own hands—he's told Bronner—he's told three or four neighbors that he's going

to run you out of the country, but not kill you. He's going to hold you up—make you dance— Probably cripple you by shooting a foot off."

"That testimony," Cole paused, "that testimony is all available?"

"Why—yes, it is," Maltby nodded. "To tell the truth, you haven't a ghost of a show against that scoundrel. But he's riding light and he has money. At least, his credit is good. But there isn't a decent or square-dealing citizen in this whole country who isn't afraid of him. And we'd all be blamed glad to see him set on the ground and walked."

"May I borrow your car for tomorrow?" Cole asked casually. "You see, I don't know much about this country. I'd like to run around a little."

"Eh—just—um-m—yes, sir! You can take any —— thing I got—and good luck to you!"

The following morning, at dawn, Maltby found his garage empty. He found, too, a note written on the store typewriter which said:

> DEAR MR. MALTBY:
> Some things a man don't have to stand, and one is being run out of the country. If I don't come back able to look out for myself, notify my folks at 416 Newhouse Lane, Syracuse, N. Y. You understand I appreciate your good will and I trust you'll always remember with respect your pin-cushion sport. Yours,
> SIDNEY COLE.

"What the Hades?" Maltby exclaimed, "Why—"

Within an hour after eight o'clock about every one in Drycup had come to Maltby's hardware store to confirm the rumor that Sid Cole was not on duty there. The proprietor admitted the clerk had left that morning early. He did not say Sid had taken the automobile, just letting the community stew in its own curiosity. But he noticed for himself that both quivers were gone with their harness from the leather pack, while several arrows had been discarded for type or imperfections. Also, a pump shotgun was gone from the rack-cabinet—a rental weapon.

Maltby alone knew that Cole had wearied of talk. The stranger had recognized the advantage of getting the jump. The newcomer's chances against a hard and crooked fighter like Snip Dayfuss were faint indeed, but, somehow, Maltby felt exultant, though reason hardly justified his exhilaration.

Cole had headed down into Snip Dayfuss's own country. The man's big ranch was in a wide valley in steep, broken land covered with brush on the slopes, crests of cedar clumps and many slides, alkali flats and knobs. Along one ridge juniper grew in red gravel in a mile long narrow brake. The ranch road wound down a gulch, followed the slope around to the west and passed the outfit's buildings at the mouth of a cañon where water gushed up out of a drilled well into a wide concrete tank, and then irrigated half a section of alfalfa fenced against rabbits.

The hardware clerk had studied the lay of the land by means of a topographical survey map. He had also prospected the locale when he found himself confronted by the dilemma of fight or leave the country. He had merely to listen to the store-gossips for general conditions. He knew that the bully had been estimating his cattle for several days, working south, which would bring him up the road within a day or two. And so, as he studied the valley, Cole saw two horsemen come toward him in the rosy crystalline light of that glorious dawn. There would be no delay.

The two horsemen on fine half-breeds of the range came into the narrows at the end of the juniper ridge; Cole stepped from behind a huge mushroom rock and hailed the two from behind.

"Howdy—"

Dayfuss looked over his shoulder, but Foreman Gavrel's elbows moved outward, his hands turning upward. He had seen the two automobile ruts where the car had turned into the draw. Moreover he felt the hard menace of that sharp, heavy tone of voice. He did not need to look back.

"Get down!" the hold-up ordered. "Keep this side the horses!"

Both men understood the twelve-gauge repeating shotgun in thirty seconds, when their eyes turned to it. Snip let fall his .30-o repeating-rifle. Gavrel let go of his own .30-o carbine. They stood facing the slender stranger from back yonder, and if Gavrel had any idea of being other than neutral in this strictly personal affair between his employer and the clerk, he lost it when he obeyed orders and snapped a pair of handcuffs on his own wrists, making a

link of his arms through the right front wheel of the automobile.

"Now Dayfuss," Cole said to the disarmed rancher, "You've done a heap of talking. You're a bully, and bullies are white-livered cowards. I know you've figured a sure bet, getting me on the drop to kill me without a ghost of a show. But I'm taking a fifty-fifty break. Now I'll fight you my shotgun against your rifle at twenty yards. How about it, old-timer?"

Dayfuss shrank like a hawk in a trap. He could get a deer the second or third jump in the brush. He was fast with a rifle—but the shotgun would tear him to pieces. His foreman saw the employer shrink from taking a chance with a man who might be a fast gun shot.

"Or you take this shotgun. I'll go to the other end of this juniper patch and we'll hunt each other toward the middle of it—I'll carry my bow and arrows."

The rancher turned to look at that stout bow with the pretty feathers. Even then he hesitated, as he remembered the Indian work with such weapons, the jeopardy of dense cover—but he was hardly afraid. He could not quite hide either his exultation or his contempt of a fool who would take such a chance when he had the advantage. Dayfuss had never felt the warm glow of sportmanship in his blood—the satisfaction of giving fair play.

"Either way you'll fight," Cole said, "or you'll go down to Drycup and crawl from the city limits to Maltby's store to beg my pardon."

Dayfuss bristled.

"I'll fight!" he snarled, twisting his lips.

"You'll be witness?" Cole asked Gavrel.

"Yes, sir," the foreman replied, "I'm neutral, course!"

WITHOUT a word the stalwart unlocked the handcuffs and tossed them into the car.

"You'll see fair play," Cole said, handing him his .30-0 carbine," Here are buckshot shells—twenty-five. The gun's got Double B's, now, in the barrel, and the other shells are light buck—swan shot they call it. Now, Dayfuss, get over there sixty paces. Face the other way. Stay there till I'm out of sight. When I'm gone, wait half an hour and Gavrel will give you the shotgun. You come into the cedars there—or run for your ranch."

Dayfuss went as ordered, his very neck splotchy with red and white—rage and haste curiously mingled. Cole swung his quivers carefully and strung his bow with equal care. Then he headed for the far end of the juniper ridge.

"Why didn't you kill 'im!" Dayfuss demanded angrily, when the young challenger was out of sight, "you had every chance—"

"I don't happen to be that kind, Dayfuss!" Gavrel exclaimed angrily.

"Well, by cripes, I'm going to finish him now't I've got him!"

The rancher reached to take his .30-0 rifle, but Gavrel stopped him with the muzzle of the shotgun.

"You play these cards straight," Gavrel said. "You don't crook this game on that boy. Why, you coward—afraid to meet a Down East kid tenderfoot with a bow and arrow—you with a buckshot gun! What ails you, Dayfuss?"

His own foreman's astonished contempt and anger dashed the rancher's spirits into something like a sense of fair play. He nodded sullenly, yet admitting the rider was right, sitting on his heels to draw patterns in the sand while he waited. Presently Gavrel said—

"Time to go!"

Without a word Dayfuss took the shotgun and headed up the slope into the belt of cedars, stumbling as he scrambled hurriedly along, and looking around about with swift jerks of his head. Gavrel could hear him trampling, grinding the small stones for minutes after he was out of sight.

Climbing into the car for sake of the shade of the top, Gavrel waited, listening for a shot, or shots, while Dayfuss scurried, peering, stooping, swinging his head from side to side. He was used to hunting game, which paid almost no attention to noise. His nerve had returned with increasing hate and expectation of victory. The blow of surprize had shaken him at first. He looked over the gun, making sure the mechanism was right. The barrel was loaded with Double B's—a good choice, for it would cripple a man at fifty or sixty yards. Buckshot would finish him close by.

Now Dayfuss felt jubilant. He grinned. He was taking a gun against a bow and arrow. He had every advantage, he was sure. He was, however, in a great hurry to finish the job, and before he knew it he had come two-thirds of the way along that

narrow, mile-long patch of juniper. He stopped short, suddenly conscious of the racket he had been making.

He listened, drawing a little to one side to stand against the wide, gnarly, flat-faced trunk of an ancient cedar clump, so old that several boles had grown together with interstices and openings for looking through—a fine ambush. He could see plainly any one approaching from the eastward. He rolled and lighted a cigaret. Thus he had hunted arid-land deer successfully in the dash and stop-to-watch and confident way of many a dry-country game hunter.

Then he heard an odd *puk*, like an insect in the bark; he glanced around, hearing again the sound close by; partly turning, he heard the same noise, then a burning sting under his left arm as if a scorpion or centipede had struck him. He jerked a little, but remembered his duel. Two other stings at his left hip numbed his body as he quivered, tentatively jerking back against the gnarly cedar. He thought his chaps, or something, had hooked into dead branches.

He became conscious of sharp, fiddle-twanging hums behind him—an odd, musical, snake-like whine, a rattlesnake burr with the crisp dry rustling left out. His goatskin chaps seemed to be entangled in snags as he wriggled tentatively and unsuccessfully against the adhesion. Leaning back he looked down and saw for the first time the shafts of arrows clustered against his side, pinning him by wing and slack-fast to the tree. He gave a frantic yank, and on the instant his right arm went numb, the shotgun falling from his grasp as a darting thing like a long insect hit his flesh.

Cole had come with Down East green timber-hunting tricks, wearing moccasins and walking in deadly silence, going slow. He had let the bully surge by and had followed from behind, unable to bring himself to bushwhacking even so bitter but helpless an enemy. Looking the other way, leaning against the cedar cluster, Dayfuss offered an irresistible opportunity. Instead of killing him, Cole had pinned him fast to the wood. Cole was no tenderfoot but a thoroughly trained woodsman of the green timber wilderness.

Snip Dayfuss gave a frantic surge, enraged. He looked back at last, and saw not a pale and genteel store clerk but a savage hunter who had known the value of silence and surprize—yet hesitated to kill. He stood with his eyes dark and stern as the storm-cloud home of a sheathed thunderbolt, and a thirty-inch killer-shaft drawn to the steel-head wind and leveled straight to pin the rascal's heart and lungs to the cedar trunk.

Even the last semblance of the bully's nerve gave way. His shriek for mercy was shrill as a hawk's cry, reaching the appreciative ears of Gavrel, who listened, astonished by that acknowledgment of defeat, for it was the despairing wail for mercy that cut the clear air.

"Will you leave the country?" Cole demanded, grimly.

"Yes! I hope to God I will!" Dayfuss yelled.

"All right; I'll take over your holdings," Cole announced. "You'll deed back that water-hole you stole from the Chicago health-seeker. I'll 'tend to other matters like that, for you'll give me full quit-claims in all your holdings and affairs. As to what's left, I'll assume all the obligations and equities, and we'll leave it to Maltby and Bronner what note I'll give the bank to pay whatever money they say I'll pay you for what's fair for you to have. You understand that?"

"Yes, sir—I sell out!"

Dayfuss sagged weakly. The tough arrow shafts held him tight. Cole took his victim's six-gun and worked the arrows loose. Some shafts he had to cut because they had nicked through the hide as well the clothes. When Snip was all clear he stumbled toward the automobile.

"Tell Gavrel the bargain you've made with me!" Cole ordered.

For an instant Dayfuss wet his lips, hesitating.

"I'm selling out to him, Maltby and Bronner name the price!" Snip mumbled as he blinked.

"I'd be pleased if you'd stay with me, Gavrel!" Cole suggested.

"Blamed glad to!" the foreman declared heartily, staring at the broken bully.

With that the three climbed into the automobile to head for the town, which was eagerly awaiting news from down that way.

For a long time the residents of Drycup had been watching the road to the southward when some one spied the first up-puffing of the tawny desert dust of a disturbance away yonder where the mirage of a

silvery city opened its gates to reveal a strange and distorted shape that was at first like a black island, then a fluttering raven, and after a time a sure enough automobile on the way in. Knowing something was coming, the crowd came together to watch, commenting and wondering. Mostly they rather expected Dayfuss to surrender to the sheriff, pleading self-defense, because the fool store clerk had gone down looking for trouble.

But when the car came by with a rush, Gavrel was driving, Dayfuss was sitting in the familiar pose of a caught desperado ashamed of being alive after boasting he'd never be taken with a drop of blood in his veins. Cole was in the box behind, his quivers on his back and his bow in hand.

No one made a sound. Maltby stared, gulping with amazement and relief. He nodded when he saw his employee jerking his head significantly toward the bank, and started that way with swift footsteps. Bronner's eyes distended a moment; he nodded and led the way to the president's office. It was just as if every one was a mind reader, understanding exactly what was at hand. All stared at the long hickory bow, fascinated by the messages flashed in their own eyes.

And Snip presently shuffled out of the bank office, stopped at the paying teller's cage and presented an order which was cashed for him. He received a few hundred dollars, crossed without a look for any man to the hardware store car to take him to the ranch to obtain his personal effects—his saddle and a few odds and ends, while Gavrel accompanied him to see that this was all he made away with, while Cole drove the machine to inspect his newly acquired outfit.

Maltby sighed, blinked, wondered what the world was coming to and admitted to the fellow townsmen, who immediately drifted rapidly into this gossip circle in the store, that, yes, now dog-gone it, the only hope he had was his dad-blamed brother'd have time to get back before this new and ternation clerk of his came around with a sheepish look and a hopeful air to ask for a leave of absence.

"You don't expect he's going to keep on clerking, owning a ranch, and with Sophia Vandlar to supply the knowledge, intelligence and experience needed to supplement his dad-blimmed nerve, do ye?" some one inquired with blunt frankness.

"That's so!" Maltby grumbled, "I expect—"

"And say, Maltby!" somebody else inquired, "where can a feller get some of them bows'n arrers, anyhow.

"Why, I'll look'n see 'f my wholesalers stock 'em!" Maltby exclaimed. "But prob-'ly Cole'll give us the right of 'em. Les' see—round here some'rs!"

And while part of the crowd surged around Maltby to look through his pamphlets and catalogues, the other part gathered around the corner where stood the long, slim and until lately harmless-looking reversion in cow-country weapons. And these latter sighed and grumbled, cussing under their breaths—for dog-gone those things, anyhow!

CHEVRONS

A Five Part Story·Part III

by Leonard H. Nason

Author of "Souvenirs," "The Roofs of Verdillot," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form.

SERGEANT ROBERT EADIE, U. S. Artillery, was at the base hospital at Vittel. He had been shell-shocked and gassed. Disgusted with the frightful food, the heat and the overcrowding at the replacement camp, he and a Private Darcy had deserted and set out to rejoin their company at Vancouleurs. But at Vancouleurs they discovered that the company had moved on to Toul.

In a clearing in the woods they discovered a cook who was putting steaks in the box.

"Steak!" said Darcy.

"Give us some grub," said Eadie.

"All right," the cook answered. "Only cut me some wood first."

When they had cut the wood the cook gave them each a can of salmon. They beat him up thoroughly and ran. Later, on the road, an M. P. in a truck passed him.

"You the guys that beat up the cook?" he asked.

"What cook?" asked Eadie.

"Say," said the M. P., "I ain't askin' official. I wanna know for myself."

"Well, we had a few words with a guy back there," Eadie told him.

"Jump in," said the M. P. "That was the C. O.'s pet private cook, an' I'd better lift ya to Toul before they start scoutin' for ya."

They arrived at Toul and found their battalion. The captain told Eadie that they were preparing a drive, and Eadie had an hour to prepare for it. Eadie discovered that there had been rumors about the post that he had deserted; and he was bantered a great deal about his wound stripe—which he was wearing without authority to do so.

Eadie was detailed as liaison sergeant with an infantry battalion and followed their captain into a trench.

Berrup-Blam!

"There go my guns," cried Eadie excitedly.

"It's time we were going," said the captain.

The engagement, however, proved to be child's play, and was over with little noise and practically no casualties. Eadie returned to his battery which was preparing a march nearer the front.

On the march Eadie ran into a man named Jake whom he had known on the transport. Jake was a big red-headed fellow and attached himself to the sergeant.

When the captain summoned Eadie to tell him of another engagement in which the sergeant would accompany the infantry, he asked whom the sergeant wanted to accompany him.

"Red Jake," said Eadie.

"Why," said the captain, "he hasn't the brains or the education to make a liaison man."

"I know," said Eadie, "but he'll do what I tell him."

Eadie refused to believe that this fight would be any worse than the last; but Jake was frankly scared. They went into a trench to sleep.

Then they were awakened by a great firing of guns. The Boche! The Boche had opened fire.

FIVE seconds of that rain of steel convinced Eadie that he had been mistaken. This was going to be a FIGHT. To his horror, he saw that the advance, instead of taking to earth immediately, was still going forward. Men were dropping everywhere, some going down suddenly with a crash of equipment, others swaying like wounded animals, then sinking slowly to their knees, and so to the ground. The slightly wounded, frightened by the pain of a bullet just under the skin, a finger shot off, or a "crease," cried out loudly. There was a clamor for "First aid!" that could be heard above the machine-guns. Eadie closed his eyes to shut out the sight of the men falling, but he fell himself, headlong into an old shell-hole, and bruised himself badly on the sharp stones there. A hand seized his shoulder.

"Where yuh hit, sergeant?" Jake's homely red face, a little whiter than usual and the eyes wide open with concern, was thrust into Eadie's.

"I'm not hit," said Eadie getting up. "I just fell down. Watch yourself, never mind me."

"You was sayin' somethin' about this bein' a Sunday-school picnic last night," said Jake, fingering his gas mask. "We ain't gone to the wrong church or anything like that, have we?"

"It may not last," replied Eadie.

"It looks as though it would last a —— of a lot longer than we will," muttered Jake. They heard the shriek of a shell and flung themselves down. The shell struck very near, Eadie could swear he heard it worming its way into the earth—it burst—*BLAM!*

"First aid! First aid!"

"——!" muttered Eadie.

He remembered the time when he did not swear, but that was before his first battle.

The advance continued; blindly, drunkenly, it reeled through the fog. More shells, more machine-gun bullets splashed water into Eadie's face. Was there another of those —— swamps? Eadie looked down. There were a lot of packs scattered here, a few dead, and men with white brassards frantically binding up the wounded. This outfit had gone quite a way, thought Eadie, before they had ditched their packs. And those first aid men certainly had guts to be so far forward. He sank to his knees in a sort of mire and was forced to seize one of the blackened tree stumps to pull himself out again. A column of men with stove pipes went by, going across the front of the advance. The stove pipes were in reality Stokes mortars, and this mortar company must be lost. After them came men with telephone wire.

"What the —— is all this?" cried Eadie.

Stokes mortar detachments usually are the last of all in an advance, and telephone details are far behind the first wave. And these men were going right across the path of the advancing first wave.

"Hey!" cried Eadie, splashing over and seizing the sleeve of the artillery officer, "we're going the wrong way. We're running into the back of some other outfit! See all these packs and that gang of men going across our front? That's the last wave of an advance!"

"I know it," said the officer. "I told the major some time ago. His compass is off or he's lost his nerve. The engineer officer was killed. It's none of our business, thank God!"

Eadie's battalion continued to flounder through the mud, and in a minute or two it was definitely involved in the mass of troops that seemed to be crossing its front. When that happened there was no longer any doubt in any one's mind that the battalion had lost its direction. It had collided with troops of another division and the smoke, the fog and the confusing effect of continually lying down and getting up to avoid shell-bursts was now trebled by the fact that men were going every which way. There was tumult.

"Here, where the —— are you men going?" cried an irate officer. "What organization is this? This isn't your sector, get the —— out of here!"

Men could be heard raging everywhere.

"You ninety day wonder!" bellowed another officer, "haven't you got brains enough to know that this brook runs east and west? What do you want to go east along it for? Get your men out of here or I'll have mine fire on you."

"Steady!" called some one.

A knot of men, all fluttering maps, came splashing through the mire. At their head, still wearing his overseas cap with one silver star, walked a tall elderly man.

"You've lost your direction, Major," he said. "Do you know where you are?"

He waved his hand in a signal to withdraw to the two irate officers that had first appeared and began to explain to Eadie's major how the mistake might have been made, and how it should be rectified. Eadie, sitting down on a stump, watched the other division going by.

"I'll say we're off our track," he muttered. "That bird is a brigade commander. Those men going by are engineers or pioneer infantry, hence pick and shovel and ladders to bridge trenches with."

More men passed—signal corps men, telephone linesmen, stretcher-bearers, a Catholic chaplain with a stole about his neck, asking the wounded on the ground if they had need of him. Eadie remembered that he had not seen a man hit for some time. The battalion must be sheltered from the enemy fire. He could hear shells falling, but they were not close at hand.

"Come," yelled Jake, who had all this time chewed silently on his cigar end, "it's time we moved. The boss is goin' back the way he come."

The major's staff began to scatter, hunting for the commanders of the companies to tell them that the battalion must change direction. The major, meanwhile, waving his arm to such men as were still in sight, turned and began to move back the way he had come, paralleling the swamp.

Again clamor arose. It is a difficult job to separate two units that have collided and become involved with each other. The officers and non-coms of each tried to find their own men, but it was well nigh impossible.

One thing that saved the situation was that the troops of one division were all infantry, while those of the other were mostly auxiliary troops following up the attack. And then again, numbers of the men of Eadie's division, realizing that they had come into a part of the battlefield that was relatively calm, had not a great desire to leave it.

"GET your rockets handy," said the liaison officer to Eadie. "We'll maybe want to have a fresh barrage. The barrage was to hold on the hostile intermediate position for thirty minutes. If we get along fast, we'll just about catch up with it. The support battalion was supposed to leapfrog us there, but whether they will or not now I don't know. Do you know where you are?"

"No, sir," said Eadie, "I never saw a map of the sector."

"Well I can't tell you," said the officer, "because I don't know either. Let it ride until the fog lifts. It's getting lighter anyway, and then we can find out where we are."

"Have we passed the Boche front line yet?" asked Jake.

"I guess not," said the officer, "I haven't seen any prisoners."

They climbed up hill again, panting. The country here resembled a sheet of elephant iron, all hollows and ridges. The slopes were slippery with wet clay and the shell-holes so thick that the men had to wind their way single file among them. Some of them fell in, overbalanced by the weight of a machine-gun or a coil of wire on their shoulders.

The enemy left them alone, either because all the defenders of the sector had been killed or because they had retreated to a place more suited for defense farther on.

The fog and smoke hindered the advance, but it also hindered the enemy's observation, so that he would have no idea of where the Americans were. The battalion came out on the top of the hill and Eadie noticed that the fog was getting thinner. He could see for quite a distance now, in front, where the ground sloped away again, and on each flank, where shadowy figures with slung rifles kept coming over the hill.

"Jump out and tell those company commanders to hold up a minute or two," ordered the major. "Tell them we'll have a five minute halt so that they can get their outfits reorganized. Then come back to me and report the companies' location. If this fog lets up, as I think it will, we can get somewhere."

The enlisted members of the staff went away at a trot. They were company runners, and each went to find his own captain, as homing pigeons their loft. Eadie discovered that he could see his own shadow.

"Hi, Jake," he called, "here comes the sun. Didn't I tell you? When the sun comes out we'll all feel better. We can see the scenery and things will be a little warmer."

"I'll say they will," muttered Jake. "These here Boche ain't fixin' to let us come into their back yard an' go breakin' their windows without lettin' fly a little rock-salt at us. I ain't had much to do

with krauts in France, but I've had some truck with 'em in Wisconsin an' they're bad Indians. The time to start runnin' is when you don't see any one in the apple orchard."

The runners had not come back before the sun was out in full force. The major expressed his satisfaction and, opening a map, began to check off the prominent points on the landscape. The ground went slightly down in front and then a plateau sloped up to the white skeleton of a town. Beyond this town was a hill, a sharply outlined knob, that shut off all view in that direction. To the left were woods, and a crooked valley, in which occasional shells burst, sending up a cloud of smoke like steam from a locomotive. Eadie decided that these were American shells, since he could see the flash, and the smoke would have already begun to drift away before the faint slam of the explosion was audible.

The runners came back, an officer from one of the companies with them. They reported to the major and he seemed very satisfied.

"Not so bad," he remarked to the staff, "even if we did get a little bit off the track; we got back on right away. And we're all right, the companies aren't lost or gummed up. Well, time to be going."

He blew his whistle and a number of other men blew theirs. The officers of the companies in front could be heard urging the men forward. A few stood up. The urgings became more insistent.

"Come on!" roared the major. "Get going there! Move out!"

The few men moved forward a little and others hesitatingly followed. Some jumped from one shell-hole to another, and turned about to see who was behind them.

"I don't blame them guys," remarked Jake in a whisper, "That bird got us lost once. I got my doubts o' follerin' him myself."

More infantry, seeing that the first men to stand up had not been killed, stood up in their turn and urged with boot and voice by their officers, began to cross the plateau toward the town. More and more of them came out of their holes and Eadie, looking around, saw that there was a very respectable wave of infantry climbing the slope. They advanced steadily, although the line was rather ragged now.

Tac-tac-tac-tac! One gun opened on the advance. Some men dropped. Eadie did not look, but he could hear the calls for first aid.

Tac-tac-tac-tac-tac! A friend had joined the first gun, two or three friends, in fact. The advance wavered a bit.

"They're in the town!" cried the major. "Forward! Rush that town!"

Other officers shouted indistinct commands.

TAC-TAC-TAC-TAC! A clattering roar, a deafening clamor. The infantry knew enough to lie down now, and did so. Every one went for the nearest hole, and since there were plenty of them, a man had but to drop in his tracks and he was protected.

A gust of bullets swept into the staff; the artillery officer went down, a runner cried out, and Eadie made a leap for a deep hole, into which he plunged. He lay there for a full minute, listening to the shouting, to the hacking of the guns, and a sharp barking sound, that must be grenades bursting. How bad was this going to be? A cautious look over the edge of the shell-hole showed him the town, white smoke from grenades near it, the men of the foremost wave in shell-holes above him, and some others who were trying to advance by crawling.

Phwit! A dimple suddenly appeared in the ground before Eadie's eyes and a few grains of dirt trickled out. Eadie promptly sought the bottom of the hole. A whole handful of bullets landed in the place where his head had just been and covered him with dirt.

Zinnnnnnng! went a ricochet.

"By ——!" cried Eadie.

He very gently removed his helmet and shoved it out of the rear rim of the hole. It came sailing back to him with two long creases on the side and a hole through the top. The sergeant felt again that icy hand about his heart that he had felt so many times before in battle.

But this time it seemed to be a stronger, colder hand. The bullets in the edge of the hole, the ricochet, and lastly the return of the steel helmet pointed to but one conclusion. The battalion was being shot up from the rear.

Who would have thought that a battalion advancing so slowly as this one had would leave enemy machine-gunners behind it! How was such a thing possible?

Ah! But the major had gone astray, one company and a platoon of another had followed him, and the other companies finding themselves out of touch with their flank units, had taken to ground and waited for the major to show up.

The major had first gone east, and then returned to the plateau diagonally, and having but a platoon or so left out of the men that had first become mixed with the other division, he had not covered the sector very thoroughly. Each division, afraid of again colliding with the other, had drawn away, leaving a wide gap between the two, and from this gap machine-gunners now made merry with the Americans.

There was a sudden burst of shouting and the banging of grenades from the left front, in the direction of the town.

"Stand by for a counter-attack!" cried some one. A hundred voices took up the warning.

A counter-attack! This battalion, its nerve already shaken, its confidence already lost in its officers, scattered and disorganized in shell-holes, was now to receive a counter-attack. The Germans always timed them well, just at the moment when the enemy's courage was the weakest, just at the instant when the men were of two minds, whether to stay or run. Then the Germans would send over five or six hundred or a thousand men in a dense mass, like a football team bucking the line, and this mass would make up the men's minds for them.

A counter-attack! More shouting, more grenades! Eadie unbuttoned his holster and drew his pistol. How come? Was he hit? His hand came away from the butt wet and sticky. Blood? *Cosmoline!*

"Well, I'm ——!" said Eadie. Here he was in a shell-hole in the midst of a red-hot fight, a counter-attack under way and his pistol still in the cosmoline in which it had been issued. Cosmoline is thick, heavy grease; the weapon was full of it, the barrel was packed with it, and even if he could get the firing mechanism to function, the gun would jam at the first shot if it did not burst. Well, he had his choice of cleaning it then and there with such materials as he had or of holding up his hands to the first Boche that came along.

The exterior grease he removed to a great extent by wiping the gun on his puttees. He tore a strip from his handkerchief and taking a pencil from his musette, prepared to clean the barrel. His hands shook like leaves and his teeth rattled so that he several times bit his tongue.

He dared not listen to see how the attack progressed. The machine-gun fire still continued and made his labors all the more difficult, curled in a ball as he was at the bottom of the hole.

The barrel of the automatic is removed by dismounting the slide. There is a little button just under the muzzle which is pressed, and this allows a locking cam to be turned, so that the barrel and slide can be removed. Eadie pressed this button down and turned the cam.

Now under the button is a strong spring that returns the slide to its normal position after it has recoiled from the shock of the cartridge's being fired, and in Eadie's nervous state he neglected to exert enough pressure on this spring, so that once the cam was turned and the button was free, the spring leaped under Eadie's astonished finger and went soaring out of the shell-hole.

"Fineesh!" said Eadie.

He hurled the rest of the pistol after the spring. Then followed a bitter moment for the sergeant. He had drawn that gun in the replacement camp and had left it in cosmoline because he had been too lazy to clean it. The night before the drive at Saint Mihiel he had had no time and since then he had not given the weapon a thought.

It was heavy, it was always banging his hip sore, and what time in camp it was not dangling from the spare pole of the fourgon, it was tucked away under a tarpaulin on the caisson lid. And now, of course, just when he needed it badly, it was impossible to use it.

A court martial composed of twelve Sergeant Eadies trying Sergeant Eadie for neglect of duty at that minute would have given a sentence of death by slow torture. Fool! A non-commissioned officer, and he didn't know enough to keep his pistol clean. And furthermore, he didn't know how to clean it when he had the opportunity. He was a —— fool to carry an automatic that was full of springs and things.

If he got out of this alive, a revolver for him. A revolver or a rifle. Ah! There was a thought. There must be some dead men around whose rifle was still in working order. It would be dangerous to start crawling around hunting said rifle, but it

would be just as dangerous to stay in the hole.

When this counter-attack arrived he would have to hold up his hands and the Boche might be near-sighted and not see that he had surrendered. The ground would be lumpy anyway, and he would only have to crawl from one shell-hole to the next. At that he leaped out of his hole and dived into another a few feet away. Empty. He went on to the next, dragging himself on his stomach.

The sun now shone brightly. There was a wind, a cold and bitter one. Eadie could feel it in those moments when he was going from one hole to the other. There was always one agonizing moment, when his head and shoulders were in a shell-hole and the rest of him still above ground where the bullets could get him. Eadie was of slight build, but he had never before realized what tremendous hips he had. They seemed to be mountainous, he could feel them sticking up into the sky, a perfect target for even the blindest gunner.

Eadie explored five holes without success. He found neither men nor weapons. He heard voices in the sixth and went in joyously. There were two men in it, the major and Jake.

"Good!" cried the major at sight of Eadie, "you're the artillery sergeant, aren't you? I want a barrage! Can you get me a barrage?"

"The lieutenant—" began Eadie.

"The lieutenant's dead!" barked the major. "I've got his rocket pistol and this man here has got rockets, but we haven't any code. Have you got a code? Your lieutenant had one but it's all torn to bits by bullets and full of blood and I can't read it. Listen. Tell the artillery I want a barrage on that town. I want it for fifteen minutes, then I want it to start at the north edge of the town and go slowly across the fields north. The support battalion will take care of these gunners in back of us, I hope. Tell 'em that. Tell 'em to start the barrage at once! We're held up here too long. Tell 'em to use plenty of gas, too. Lots of high explosive. Tell the heavies to fire, too. Got that? Well, do it."

"Oh ——!" cried Eadie, "you can't send any message like that with a rocket! The only way to get detailed fire like that is to send a man back."

"Why can't you see we haven't got time to send a man back?" cried the major angrily. "Do you think you could get through those gunners that are shooting us up from behind? Do you realize that we're being held up here for a —— of a long time? And what will we do while you're going three or four kilometers back to your battery? Sit here and bite our thumbs? Shoot off some rockets, quick!"

Eadie began to do some rapid thinking. A rocket requesting a barrage soaring up from somewhere in the scenery would mean little to artillery observers. In trench warfare a barrage rocket means a very definite thing; the artillery know beforehand just where to fire, but in an attack a request for a barrage would mean nothing. If the observers saw the rocket, and even if they could see where it came from, they would not know where the barrage was to be laid.

The chances were that they would lay the barrage on the necks of the troops that had requested it. As for the rolling barrage that was to precede the troops, that had undoubtedly gone rolling its majestic way onward and was now shelling positions a kilometer or so away. This barrage could be held, shifted, shortened or lengthened by rocket signals, but that would not do the battalion in the shell-holes any good.

"Come, come, for the love of ——," yelled the major. "Here's the pistol. Stick a rocket in it and shoot it. Have you got rockets? Here you, give him yours!"

Jake obediently handed a fistful of rockets to Eadie, and the sergeant, drawing his code from his pocket, consulted it. He looked at the code, pursed his lips, and inspected the bottoms of the rocket cartridges. They were of different colors, about the size and appearance of shotgun shells and on the bottom of each was marked what kind of a rocket it was, whether of three red stars, two green stars, a yellow smoke, or what.

"Give me that!" cried the major, snatching the code book from Eadie's hand. "What the —— good you are, I don't know! Sit there thumbing a book while my battalion melts away like snow!"

The major opened the book, and on the first page, which could be easily torn out and destroyed, was a code.

"Lengthen barrage, three green stars. Shorten barrage, one red star. More gas,

string of white stars. Less gas, string of red stars."

"Why this is no —— good!" cried the major. He hurled the book into the bottom of the shell-hole.

"What's it say on those cartridges?" he demanded.

"The color of the outside tells you the color of the rocket," explained Eadie, "and those little holes on the bottom tell you the number of stars. The letter means the color, too. R for red and so on. That one with a big R is a red smoke."

"Here!" cried the major, "shoot 'em all off! We ought to get some kind of action out of it. Shoot 'em off or throw 'em away, I don't care which."

"Boy, I've got it!" cried Eadie. "We must have a contact plane here somewhere. I'll fire six white stars; that calls the plane over us. Then if we show laundry, he'll see that this is our front line and if he's got brains at all he'll fly back or wireless back that we're held up here."

"Shoot it!" cried the major.

Eadie thereupon fired the rocket. There was a plane in sight about half a mile away that was dipping and circling at a low altitude and Eadie's heart was considerably lightened to see this plane straighten out and come in their direction.

"Get out a handkerchief, Jake," cried Eadie. "Have the men wave their shirts, handkerchiefs, anything white, so the guy in the plane can see our front line. I don't know whether there's a panel code or not. I haven't got a copy if there is."

"Wave your handkerchiefs, men," roared the major. "Wave your handkerchiefs so the plane can see where we are."

The booming of the plane's motor was now plainly audible. It had gained altitude a little and, as it arrived overhead, the aviator cut off his motor and glided swiftly down toward the infantry. Eadie looked up at a long dark green shape, a belly that reminded him of a darting fish.

Many voices shouted, rifles popped, then all was drowned in a crackle of a machine-gun. This plane bore beneath each wing a thin cross. It banked around, streamers flying from its rudder, and a long one of empty machine-gun belt from its belly. Again its gun crackled and three bombs that it had dropped burst in clouds of dirty smoke. The machine was a Boche.

There is nothing quite so demoralizing as attack from the air. The very novelty of the method of fighting is unnerving enough, but the helpless feeling that there is no protection from overhead attack is the worst part. Men cover their heads with their arms, they crawl under blankets and shelter halves, hold machine-gun ammunition cases over their heads.

As for these particular troops, wild panic at once took possession of them. Most of them remembered that a little way in front of them was a town and a town meant cellars. Many got up and rushed blindly for the town. Others turned on their backs and fired their rifles at the plane. Every one yelled. The plane continued to fire, other enemy machine-guns joined in, but those infantrymen could not be stopped. Their fear of the plane was greater than anything else. Enemy machine-gunners, judging the moment propitious for surrender, stood up with hands in air. They were either ignored or ruthlessly bayoneted. The major raved ceaselessly.

"Hey!" yelled Jake, seizing the major's arm, "the gang are in the town. Let's beat it for them houses!"

"What gang, you red-headed idiot?"

"Our gang!"

Eadie and the major peered over the edge of the shell-hole. It was true. Figures in olive drab could be seen diving into the ruined houses. This collection of broken walls had loomed as a refuge, and the whole battalion had converged on it in a mad headlong charge. The major turned about and emptied his pistol at the plane overhead.

"Come on!" cried the major. He and the other two leaped out of the shell-hole.

Thuck!

"Some one's hit!" shouted Eadie.

"It ain't me!" replied Jake. The major stumbled on a step or two and collapsed.

"Into a hole with him, Jake!" cried Eadie. Each seized an arm and dragged the major into a hole. One look told them that their aid would be unavailing. The major had been shot through the gas mask and the bullet evidently traversing the heart, had torn away most of the major's left side on its way out.

"Let's get outta here, Sergeant!" Jake had already stretched out one leg to leave the shell-hole.

"Just a minute," replied Eadie. "Never get excited in the face of danger."

He turned the major on one side, lifted

off his field-glass case and the glasses themselves from around the major's neck, then he jumped out of the hole and picked up the major's pistol.

"Come on, Jake, us for the town." His gas mask suddenly unhooked and dangled from his chest. Eadie tried to hook it up again and discovered that the carrying strap had been cut through and that the mask was only held to him by the string about his shoulders.

EADIE galloped toward the town, but his feet seemed burdened with lead. The hobnailed shoes were too heavy for a soldier, he thought. Ahead of him Jake seemed to fly and was already outdistancing the sergeant. They leaped in and out of holes, hurdled dead and wounded, and so arrived at the first houses of the town. The first cellar was full and the men overflowed up the stairs that led into it, a pushing, yelling crowd. The second stairway was also filled and so were the third and fourth.

Jake, whooping like an Indian, continued down the street, firing his revolver. A group of men clustered about a cellar entrance scattered and Jake went to earth in that black burrow like a rabbit. Yells and faint shouts came from below ground. The shadow of the plane fell on the street, and every one took to cover at once.

Eadie leaped a pile of débris and dived through a doorway. He found himself in the living-room of a shattered house. A stairway led up in the corner, but above was nothing but naked beams and broken rotting boards. There was a machine gun in one corner, but its crew had disappeared.

"What next," thought Eadie.

His first care was to load the pistol he had taken from the major. Bullets were cracking overhead and smacking against the house walls. A counter-attack had started from this town not so long ago. What had become of it? Men yelled, and the shadow of the plane slid up and down the street, like a shark's on sandy bottom. There were two of those planes now and they showed no signs of leaving.

Eadie wondered if they would ever run out of ammunition. He examined the machine-gun. At first look it appeared intact, but a closer examination revealed the fact that the water jacket had been punctured. Eadie peeked through the hole in the wall through which the gun would have fired.

All he could see was fields, torn and mangled by the bombardment, rolling hills, and little patches of forest in the far distance. All the landscape was covered with bursting shells; in the sky mysterious planes passed and repassed at terrific speed, or circled above sections of the battlefield like hawks. He crossed the room and, crawling under some tumbled beams, looked out a window on the other side of the house that commanded a view of the street. It was just a bare stretch of road lined with piles of stone and rubbish. He could see, here and there, the black entrance of a cellar, with beams or railroad iron sticking out, showing that the floor over the cellar was well reinforced as a protection against shell-fire. Probably those cellars were full of the enemy.

The town was quiet. Somewhere to the eastward there was a steady clatter of fire, but in the town itself all was still. A man could hear all the better the vicious whack of snipers' bullets against the walls of the houses, and the cracking of bullets overhead.

The battalion had taken to earth in the cellars of the southern part of the town and the town had now two masters, the Americans to the south and the Germans to the north. One would have to drive the other out, and Eadie, thinking of the disorganization he had seen, the losses that the battalion had already undergone and the fact that the major had been killed and the staff scattered, began to fear that it would be the Americans that would be driven out. Another counter-attack would do it.

Whack! went a bullet and dust flew from the stones above Eadie's head. He backed hurriedly into the center of the room and then took refuge in the fireplace. Another bullet zipped through the hole, ricocheted from the breach of the machine-gun, and went humming out through the roof, *zeeeeee!*

"Now then," muttered Eadie, "if I stick around in here alone I'll get the shivers again. As long as I'm doing something, I don't mind."

Again the shadows went by overhead. A gun rattled faintly. *Prrrrit!* went a burst in the road in front of the house and a cloud of dust arose. Eadie backed into the fireplace. Ah, but they could shoot down the chimney at him! He started to back out again.

"Hey, Eadie," cried a faint voice from the street. "Hey, Sergeant, where yuh at?"

"In here," yelled Eadie, "in the house."

It was Jake's voice and Eadie thought after he had replied that the Boche could hear him as well as Jake, and he might get a grenade lobbed at him. Again he ducked into the fireplace.

"Sergeant," said Jake's rough voice close at hand, "where yuh at? Give us a look a minute."

Eadie stuck his head around the corner of the hearth. Jake, leaning in through the window, was looking around in search of him.

"Oh there you are," said Jake, seeing him. "Say, come out here a minute. I got some prisoners here I took. What'll I do with them?"

Behind Jake Eadie could see seven or eight Germans standing patiently in the street, overcoats and blankets over their arms, and bundles of clothing, pipes, and accordions in their hands. They looked like immigrants with a guide.

"For ——'s sake, come in out of that street," gasped Eadie.

"What'll I do with these prisoners?" demanded Jake indignantly. "I captured 'em myself. They fought like wildcats, I aint kiddin'!"

"Oh ——!" moaned Eadie, "and I asked to have you go with me! Give 'em a —— good kick and start 'em down the road. Come in here out of the wet! You'll get killed!"

The prisoners, themselves, for all their mild patient looks, kept casting an apprehensive eye up at the sky, or looking over their shoulders in seeming anxiety.

"To —— with 'em," cried Eadie, "turn 'em loose and come in here! We're due for a counter-attack any minute!"

Jake looked doubtfully at the prisoners and then instinctively ducked as a bullet cracked overhead.

"Counter-attack, huh?" repeated Jack. He threw one leg over the sill.

"*Nein*, no," spoke one of the prisoners, a sad-eyed, fatherly sort of man, "*alles* gone."

He waved a finger back and forth in front of his face.

"*Kaputt!*" he said.

"*Ja! Ja!*" agreed the others.

One turned and waved his hand in a sort of farewell gesture toward the northern hills.

"I know what that means," said Jacke, "an' I aint no German, neither. That means their gang has all pulled out."

Something cracked at the upper end of the street, and Jake hastily stepped over the pile of rubbish and beckoned his prisoners to follow him into the house. They came in fearfully and huddled in the center of the room, clutching their bundles. Jake pulled and pushed them into a line and surveyed them thoughtfully. They were old, all were gray-haired, and two wore spectacles. They shuffled their feet and looked at the ground, at the crisscross of beams over their heads, anywhere but at Jake or Eadie.

"I took 'em alive!" said Jake with pride. "You wouldn't think it to look at 'em what a scrap they put up."

Eadie replied with a hoarse laugh. Jake, however, paid no attention but walked around and around his squad, and finally took his position in front of them. The prisoners, expecting some sort of command, stiffened their backs and stopped shuffling their feet.

"Now then," said Jake, "who's got any chewin' tobacco among yuh?"

Receiving no reply, he turned to Eadie.

"Sergeant," said he, "if you knew how much you sounded like a jughead brayin' away up that chimney you wouldn't laugh so hard."

"Ah, Jake!" gasped Eadie, "you'll be my death."

"Well," said Jake, turning about with his hands on his hips, "what do we do now?"

"Not much," replied the sergeant. "You and I are artillerymen. These doughboys have the work to do. Let 'em do it. While these planes buzz around overhead we'll guard the prisoners. I thought we might set up that gun in the corner and take a crack or two with it, but it's fineesh."

"I ain't kickin'," remarked Jake, taking off his helmet and ruffling his red hair. "You don't want to go gettin' them airmen mad. They'd lay an egg on this house an' you an' me would put in for a harp an' a white nightgown. I wish this war was over."

"It is, pretty near," said Eadie. "We've lost a lot of men and haven't gone very far. And then the major's dead. And also this support battalion that was to leapfrog us won't get by the gunners we left in our wake. Aside from that and these two planes overhead, we haven't anything to worry about."

"We can see better, anyway," muttered Jake, "now that the —— mist is gone."

"The Boche can see us, too," remarked Eadie. "That fog helped as much as it hindered. There's too many hills in this part of the world. I don't like it."

"Them glasses you got off the major any good?" asked Jake suddenly.

"By ——!" cried Eadie.

He put his hand swiftly behind his mask and drew out the major's glasses. He had tucked them there, the strap about his neck, and had forgotten them.

"Man," said Eadie admiringly, "they look like a keen pair."

He inspected them carefully, putting them to his eyes tentatively.

"I can't see a thing," he muttered.

His eye roamed about the room and fell upon the stairway that went up in the corner. There was nothing at the top of that stairway but space, but a second look showed a tiny ledge, and the root of what had once been the wall of a room. Bits of wall paper still clung to it.

"Come on up there," said Jake, following Eadie's thought. "We can get a swell look around."

"Uh!" grunted Eadie. "We'd most likely get a swell slug through our skulls, too. Well, come on. I yearn to peek through these field-glasses."

"I forgot my prisoners," muttered Jake. He fingered his lip doubtfully. "I don't want 'em to light out on me," he continued.

He regarded the prisoners a second, while Eadie polished the lenses of his field-glasses.

"Listen, you birds," began Jake, shaking his immense fist at the prisoners, "I'm a hairy wolf an' the direct descendant of a long line o' catamounts! Never forget it! I'm goin' up them stairs with the sergeant here to look at the scenery. An' if I come down an' find that one of you has moved one foot outta place, I'll knock him into a swound!"

"What the —— is a swound?" asked Eadie, as the two went very carefully up the staircase.

"I don't know," said Jake. "I was to a theayter once where some one fell into one, and from the screechin' an' groanin' an' rollin' around, I judged it's about the last stage."

There was a fairly good view from the ledge. Eadie adjusted the glasses and brought them to bear. The ground seemed to leap at him and he nearly fell. These glasses were a very fine pair, high-powered with longer tubes than the ordinary prism glass, and the effect of first looking through them was startling. Eadie looked toward the American lines, and saw men advancing, probably the support battalion. Toward the German lines he could see nothing. Ah!

"Jake," cried Eadie, "Jake! I can see where this shooting is coming from!" He extended the glasses to Jake without taking his eyes from the place where he had them last focussed. "Look, Jake, at that—what the ——!" His groping hand met space.

"Come down!" yelled Jake. He was at the bottom of the stairs. "Come down! The whole German army is shootin' at yuh!"

There was the end of a beam just behind Eadie and something struck this beam quite a blow. Eadie went down without availing himself of the stairway.

From the south end of the town came a faint call—

"Come outta that!"

The prisoners stood up and appeared to be making preparation for departure. Close at hand a voice that was undoubtedly an officer's ordered some one out of a cellar and excitedly demanded the battalion commander. There were more voices in the town, some faint, others close at hand. Eadie and Jake skipped across the floor and peeked through the hole in the corner of the wall again.

There were many men in olive drab coming up the street, ducking from doorway to doorway. Across the ruins Eadie could see the bobbing helmets of others who were skirting the town. From time to time one of these men would be hit. Other Americans, urgently invited, came out of cellars and joined the newcomers.

"It's the support battalion," said Eadie, "we might as well go out."

THE two stepped back and started to clamber over the débris before the door.

"Look out, now," muttered Eadie, "these guys are liable to be nervous."

They crossed the rubbish heap and arrived in the street, Jake's prisoners tumbling hastily after them. Eadie was about to curse them all from Jake down, but he saw too many doughboys looking at him, their

faces turned toward him with all the curiosity of cows whose pasture has been invaded.

These doughboys, rattled as they were, and exceedingly prone to shoot first and look afterward, seemed to realize that Eadie and Jake were Americans, but one of them, some one in the rear of the first party, saw only the crowding prisoners and hurled a grenade. Eadie saw it coming and fled across the street, Jake following. Five or six infantrymen who were within range of the burst threw themselves down, though such action would not save them from a grenade.

The Germans went immediately back into the house. However, the soldier who had thrown the grenade had been nervous and unsettled in mind, else he would not have thrown it in the first place, and that being the case he had simply pulled out the ring and immediately gotten rid of the grenade. It takes about five seconds for the fuse to burn, and in five seconds a man can do a lot of things.

One of the infantry, seeing no other way of escape, picked the grenade up and hurled it into an open cellar, where it burst viciously, but did no harm.

"No more grenade throwing!" called the man who had picked up the last one. "Dig those Boche out of there! Where did those two men go that ran across the street?"

"They're a coupla runners," advised some one. "I seen 'em with the battalion staff this morning."

"Hey!" called the first speaker, "come out of there! Where's the major?"

Eadie and Jake emerged.

"Where's the major?" the man demanded again. Eadie guessed that this newcomer was an officer, though he wore no insignia.

"The major's dead," replied he.

"Who's in command? Do you know where any of the staff are? Where the —— is every one? What company are you running for?"

"We're artillerymen," said Eadie. "The major was killed out there in a shell-hole. I don't know who's in command or where any one is. They pulled a counter-attack on us and we've been disorganized ever since."

"Counter-attack my granny!" scoffed the officer. "That was some —— fool trying to rush the town. We saw that from the trenches. Well, I'm senior officer until some one ranks me out of it. You men, bomb all these cellars and let's get to —— out of here. This town makes too easy an aiming point."

A man was hit at less than a yard's distance, as if to give weight to the officer's remarks. Every one else took to flight again. The officer cursed himself hoarse.

A very trembling guard appeared with Jake's prisoners.

"Just a minute there, buddy," called Jake, "where you fixin' to go with them squareheads?"

"I'm gonna take 'em out," replied the other.

"You just leave 'em be," said Jake. "I'm lookin' after them krauts. They belong to me."

"Lay off," said Eadie, seizing Jake's arm. "You've got to turn 'em in somewhere. You don't think they let you take 'em all the way to Bordeaux, do you? He'll only go back as far as the M.P. line with 'em."

"Well, what the —— is the use of takin' prisoners if you can't go back with 'em?"

Another man fell with a sharp cry.

"Let's get out of here!" yelled the officer. "Go up on the hill and come down again behind the town. Then any one that's in these cellars will come out and surrender. You two artillerymen stay with me. Do you know how to ask for a barrage?"

"I know," said Eadie, "but I don't think it will do any good."

"Well, you do it anyway. I'll tell you when. Here! You see that clump of bushes up there? Wait for me there. I've got to go back and pry some of these dug-out barnacles loose!"

He went raging back along the street, and assisted by some non-commissioned officers, began dragging men from behind walls and out of doorways by the scruff of their necks.

"Come on," said Jake, "I know how we can get through those houses. I remember when I took my prisoners. You go in a house and out the back."

"Are there any stiffs there?" asked Eadie with distaste. "I don't want to go near any stiffs, I've seen too many already today."

"There's no stiffs," Jake assured him. "None of our fellers got that far."

They went in the front door of a house and avoiding the holes in the floor, through which one caught glimpses of a cellar full of rotting straw and tumbled blankets, went

out the back and cautiously climbed the hill, keeping below the crest as much as possible. From here they had an even better view of the battlefield than from the town.

Smoke, smoke in all directions, balloons on the far horizon in the direction of the American lines, and balloons on the other horizon where the Germans were. Westward were thick woods with shrapnel blinking above the treetops, and to the east a red-roofed town and a road with ambulances running on it. Here was Eadie, on the crest of the American advance, and on the right ambulances running!

"They're Americans," said Eadie, looking at them through his field-glasses.

He pointed them out to the officer, who arrived at that moment with two others like him and a group of infantry.

"Yes, I dare say they've got ambulances running," said the officer. "That's the —— regular Army for you! Go kiting across the landscape and devil take any one else. You'd think they'd give a look once in a while to see how the rest of us were getting on, or not getting on, rather."

The officer began to send messengers off with directions for an advance. He told the other two men, who, like himself, bore no insignia, but who had officer stamped all over them, that he decided from the fact that there was no artillery resistance, that the Germans had pulled out and that what was needed was an energetic advance. Eadie gathered that the advance was about five hours behind their schedule. The officer was a young man, clear-eyed, and an athlete. He had been a football player, probably president of his class, and was undoubtedly a splendid leader. An officer, however, must have more than ability to lead, especially if he has non-commissioned officers who are as ignorant as himself. Eadie, on his stomach beside Jake, nudged the latter.

"He's going to leave that town as full of Boche as a dog of fleas," said Eadie, "and out they'll come the minute we go past and blow —— out of us."

"I don't think so," said Jake. "I think the prisoners I took was the last. The others pulled foot about the time that bold brave looey took his platoon into the town on the gallop and made a lot of work for the buryin' squad."

"What's all this?" cried Eadie.

"Why, when we was out there in the hole with the major a looey takes a platoon or so and makes a rush for the town with a lot o' yellin' an' grenade throwin'. I don't think they got far."

"I didn't see that," said Eadie, "I thought that noise was a counter-attack."

"You was too busy keepin' your head down," replied Jake.

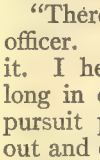
"That so? Well, you want to keep your block of solid bone down, too, or you'll get a slug through it."

"Listen, artillery," said the officer, crawling over beside Eadie, "what can you do for a little fire? See that hill over there? There's a pill box on top of it. That's where this fire is coming from. Then I suppose your eagle eye can see that hill way up the valley with the church on it? They've got observatories there with glasses in 'em so strong they can read the number on our collar ornaments. Now, until we find some one better, I'm in command. I'm captain of what's left of F company. I want some fire. Can I get it or not?"

Eadie took out his code book and consulted it again. He found nothing there that he had not seen before, except that a chain of green stars was to announce the battalion's arrival at a certain road, and a red smoke the capture of Montfaucon, wherever that was.

"I can't do it," said Eadie. "There's no way you can call for fire on points not designated beforehand except by telephone or messenger. We might get a plane over here and stake out our line with panels and then make him the signal that we were held up by artillery fire. I don't advise it, because I fired a bundle of stars for a plane to come over and when it came it was a Boche."

"There were two of them," said the officer. "I saw them myself. They've beat it. I hear they don't stick around very long in one spot because we've really got pursuit planes and they really will come out and chase a Boche away. At least, the Boche think so. Well, if we can't get any artillery, we'll have to do it with the rifle. In five minutes we try. Give me a cigaret."



THE advance did not begin again in five minutes, nor yet in fifty. The appearance of the Americans on the rising ground above the town had been the signal for a hail of fire, mostly from the left front, where there were considerable forests.

A patrol went cautiously forward toward the pill box and made progress, and Eadie, watching them through his glasses, could see them getting closer and closer to the concrete structure. Some enterprising officer began to follow this patrol with a force of about company strength.

A patrol on the other flank, crawling out across the fields, was met with a burst of fire from a patch of woods and killed. Their bodies lay there in a little group, silently marking the limit of advance in that direction.

A faint popping and the gushing of smoke from the pill box announced that the patrol had managed to get close enough to bomb the place. The officer with Eadie had hardly expressed his satisfaction when a man came crawling up from the direction of the town, demanding the whereabouts of the commanding officer.

"What do you want him for?" asked the officer.

"I've got a message for him from the colonel," replied the soldier.

"Let me see it."

The officer took the slip of paper and opened it. He read aloud, but softly, as though to himself.

To the commanding officer, flanked battalion: Advance. If an advance is not signaled in your sector within five minutes, consider yourself relieved from command and report to me under arrest.

"Hmmm! That's nice."

The officer looked thoughtfully out over the country before him. A little way in front lay the bodies of the patrol that had been killed on the left flank. Farther to the left white smoke marked the position of another regiment of the division. They had not advanced as far as he had, but had evidently found something to bomb.

On the right things looked a little more cheerful. A long brown line now reached from the pill box to the positions just beyond the town.

"All right," said the officer sadly, "tell him I'll advance. Tell him Captain Lawrence is in command of the battalion now."

The messenger crawled back down the hill and Eadie nudged Jake.

"There's a John for you," whispered Eadie. "He should have steered that messenger somewhere else. He might know that anything that came from rear to front would be a lot of red-hot peeve. Now he's elected himself goat for whatever hard luck we run into."

"Forward!" yelled the officer, blowing his whistle. He signaled with his arm and received quite a hearty response. Men who had been concealing themselves in shell-holes and behind folds in the ground and remnants of hedge fences, crawled forward quite readily. Most of them had seen the progress of the attack on the pill box.

"You wait here, Sergeant," said the officer. "You know a one-pounder outfit when you see it? Well, there ought to be one come by here, and if it doesn't, you go down into the town and find it. Then bring it up on that hill for me."

The officer went down the hill consulting his compass, and evidently talking to Jake, who paid no heed, but kept looking sadly back at Eadie. Eadie turned about and surveyed the country behind him. He knew what to look for. A one-pounder was a toy cannon, a tiny model of a .75, that looked like something a man would give his son to play soldier with, or to celebrate Fourth of July with. This cannon had wheels, of course, and a ridiculous shield, and was drawn by a tiny limber and a mule. When the gun went into action, however, its likeness to a toy ceased. The gunners would unhitch it from its cute little limber and drag it themselves to a good position, where the gun would be taken off the wheels and set up on a tripod. The gun having been aimed, fire would be commenced with small steel shells, filled with high explosive powder. Then let any machine-gun, pill box, or *minenwerfer* within range look to itself.

Eadie spotted the column after a few minutes' search. Instead of coming as far forward as they could with their mules, the gunners had evidently unlimbered at the jump-off, and had been dragging their guns ever since.

This must have been exceedingly tiring, and if the advance had not been held up so long, the one-pounder companies would have been left too far behind to be of any use. Eadie put away his field-glasses and crawled down the hill to the town.

He found the head of the one-pounder column at the south entrance of the town, a disgusted officer sitting on a stone, and the personnel stretched out on the ground. To this officer Eadie presented the request for the advance of the one-pounders.

"All he can have is one," said the officer. "I'm glad to give it to him. We'd like to see some service. First squad, go with this sergeant. You'll be under the orders of the battalion commander. He wants you to do some shooting."

The squad leaped at their gun with alacrity. A sergeant barked orders at them with drill-book distinctness. Two men seized the gun from its carriage, two more picked up the trail—the thing came apart like a take-down shotgun—and a fifth man removed the wheels to the ditch. Two sad-eyed men, who were probably spare gunners, and the sergeant, burdened themselves with ammunition, and looked at Eadie.

"Forward!" said Sergeant Eadie.

It occurred to him that it might have been better to have left the gun on the wheels a little longer, for it would be a long carry up the hill, but the one-pounder men must know what they were doing.

The carry was indeed long. From shell-hole to shell-hole they went, and once over the crest of the first rise, they began to be fired at.

Bullets cracked overhead, a shell evidently intended for them exploded within hair-raising distance, but none of the men were hit. Eadie, on his own initiative, took the squad a roundabout way, and brought them up the eastern face of the hill on which the pill box stood, along a trench system that had been turned into a gigantic furrow by the American artillery the night before. Here the sweating, panting, one-pounder men flung themselves to the ground and took a five minute rest.

Their next surge forward brought them to the pill box, where they found Jake, the acting battalion commander and another officer impatiently awaiting them. The one-pounder was put into action, though the men were not as snappy and alert as they had been before the kilometer climb laden with gun and ammunition.

But it was finally set up and the officer in command, Captain Lawrence, took the one-pounder sergeant out on the flank a little way and pointed out some targets to him, principally the clump of brush and another pill box down the valley. The one-pounder began its peculiar whining bark and the doughboys in the surrounding holes were highly encouraged.

"Now, then," said Captain Lawrence, coming back to where the two artillerymen and the other officer lay on their stomachs, "we're going forward again. I've been looking around up here. The most resistance is from those woods over there on the left and from farther up the valley. From the right and front we don't get anything. That's another division's sector anyway. So we'll pound the woods and the valley a while and that ought to allow us to advance."

Ping! went the one-pounder and the watchers on the hill saw presently a little thread of white smoke wander out of the woods. *Ping!* went the gun again. It fired for several minutes, then at the suggestion of Captain Lawrence and after some hoarse shouting on the part of the sergeant, the target was changed and the gun fired a dozen rounds or so into the clump of brush in the valley.

The sergeant then exclaiming that he could see troop movements in the valley, began sniping about at will. The sixty rounds or so that the gunners had brought with them were soon used up and the spare gunners were sent for more. The infantry, lying about in the shelter of folds of the ground, enjoyed themselves hugely. Some opened cans of hash and ate. The distant roar of the battle held no terrors for them. The men sent for ammunition returned.

Ping! went the gun gleefully. There was a sudden scurry of feet. Eadie, rolling a cigaret, looked up. A white-faced officer, his ill-fitting blouse bulging from his pistol belt, bareheaded, his breeches torn in great rents and showing bloody wire cuts in his legs, came rushing into the group about the one-pounder and knocked the gunner headlong.

He seized a shell and hurled it into the scenery, grabbed a leg of the tripod and grunting tremendously, overturned the gun. The protesting sergeant he knocked into a sprawling heap.

"Oh, ——!" cried Eadie, "lie low, Jake! Don't mix in this! They'll probably shoot him full of holes."

"I'm lying low," said Jake in a muffled voice, for his face was buried in the dirt. "Tell 'em to put up their guns, Sergeant."

"Steady, men!" called Captain Lawrence. "Put up those guns! What's the trouble here, Major?"

The officer who had upset the gun turned, panting. He wore a pistol belt and what

was known as a mail order uniform, but he had a major's gold leaves on his shoulder.

"Who—who's shooting that gun?" he demanded.

"The gunners," replied Captain Lawrence.

The major thereupon swung on Captain Lawrence, a sharp vicious jab that would have probably laid the captain away for some time, but that several soldiers hurled themselves on the major's arm and thereby stopped the blow.

"Take him away," went on the captain. "Give him a shot of coke and a bucket of water over his head and let him wait for the doctor."

The major flung the men from him as though they had been so many babes. He held up his hand.

"Listen!" he cried. "Just a minute until I get my breath!"

No one moved. There was that in the major's eye and attitude that commanded obedience.

"Turn around," whispered Eadie, "there'll be a —— of a smell over this and we want to be able to say we didn't see it."

"Not me," said Jake, "it's too interestin'. I like to go to court anyways. It gets yuh out of work."

"You big ass!" began the major, pointing his finger at Captain Lawrence. "You —— fool! You've been shelling the —— out of my battalion!"

"What!" cried all, like the chorus in an opera.

"You idiot! You're under arrest or relieved from command or whatever they do! I've a —— good mind to bring my outfit up here and police you all up! Have you got any sense? Did it ever occur to you that fire to the flank might land in some other element of the division? No, it did not! You're insane! You ought to be killed like a mad dog! You've driven my men out of a position it took three hours to capture. Well, I'll have your hide for this. Don't forget it for a minute. And you men—" he shook his fist at the one-pounder crew—"this time ten years from now you'll still be breaking rocks!"

Abruptly the major turned and ran down the hill.

"Set up that gun again," directed the captain. "I still think he's crazy."

Then it was that things began to happen. Runners arrived, a half dozen of them, all with imperative orders to cease firing and to advance. Fire, possibly from American troops who had been shot up by the one-pounder, was suddenly opened on the troops on the hill and many were hit.

Captain Lawrence, a little white about the lips, blew his whistle and ordered an advance across the plateau. The one-pounder was taken down and the gunners sweated forward with the infantry. This battalion, because it had advanced ahead of the others, and because the troops on the left had fallen back under the misdirected fire of the one-pounder, now had its flank in the air and began to receive fire from both flank and front.

The men lay down, the one-pounder was set up, and firing very carefully to the front, it quieted some machine-gun fire from that direction.

The afternoon began to grow into night and the battalion, like a wounded snake, dragged its bleeding length slower and slower across the plateau that shelved upward to the ruined town in the distance. On the hill they had been unmolested for two reasons. The right of the hill was in the sector of another division, a division of veterans, who had gone along their sector rapidly and thoroughly, and who were now some miles away to the north.

Elements of this division had lost their way in the fog and had swung in and attacked the Germans in front of Eadie's battalion, in flank. The Germans had welcomed them royally, but the Americans had not broken off the attack until well on in the afternoon, when it had become apparent that not only were they lost, but that further progress in the direction in which they were going was impossible. Once these troops withdrew, the Germans could turn all their attention to the division of which Eadie's battalion formed a part.

All along the front the German resistance stiffened. The element of surprize was gone, the beaten zone of the American artillery had been passed, the Germans knew what was going on. This was no feint, this was no demonstration; nine divisions, a quarter of a million men on a front of less than twenty miles, meant a drive. And the German had something to defend here; he had a railroad that was his jugular vein. If it was cut, he perished. He threw in fresh troops, brought up reserves by truck, by rail, by narrow gauge,

and on foot. He issued orders to stop the advance and the troops that held the front line did their best to comply with the order.

The troops of Eadie's battalion soon found that the easy time they had had since they had left the town was over. Their advance had been so slow that the enemy machine-gunners had been able to retire before them, and to reinforce the troops in the intermediate defense position. The fire of machine-guns was terrific. Dust rose in clouds, for the gunners fired low and many of their bullets slid along the ground, throwing up dirt and stones. An American machine-gun battalion had occupied Pill Box hill and was laying a barrage over the heads of its own troops. The one-pounder fired valiantly, and Eadie could hear others whining away down the valley. There was a line of resistance in front of the battalion, in front of the division for that matter, and the Americans, instead of being able to attack it with the vigor of the morning, when they were fresh from the jump-off and the enemy still stunned from the bombardment, must go to the assault weary, their nerves already shaken and their strength already drained by a day's casualties. As for the enemy, they were doubtless fresh troops brought up from the rear during the afternoon.

"This is the intermediate position we've hit," said Captain Lawrence to Eadie. "We were due here at ten o'clock. It's four-thirty now. We're only six hours late. We'll likely be later before we see the other side of this trench system. What do you think the chances are on a little fire from the artillery?"

"They ought to be good," said Eadie. "We've got balloons up and the birds in the balloons know where we are. If I shoot up an S. O. S. rocket we ought to get some action."

"We ain't got no balloons," interrupted Jake. "They was all shot down long ago. I seen it on the hill."

"That's where those planes went that were flapping around over us," said Eadie. "I'm glad they left us alone this afternoon. Planes are bad stuff."

"Well, never mind the lecture, shoot me a rocket," ordered the captain. Eadie consulted the code and then handed it to Jake.

"You might as well get some instruction," said the sergeant. "If I'm hit, you'll have to carry on. Hunt in the code for an S. O. S. signal and then shoot it. Here's the pistol."

The officer, who might not have approved of this procedure, was too busy watching events to the front to pay attention to what the two artillerymen were doing. Jake selected a rocket and putting it into the pistol, snapped the apparatus shut and extending his arm, sent the signal sailing.

"They'll see it," said Eadie, "yellow smoke, at a height of seventy-five yards. There's a parachute holds it up and it stays up there about ten seconds. Look, Captain, if there are any units too close to the Boche, they'd better pull back because the barrage might fall a little short."

"Small chance," replied the captain. "We're still the farthest advanced of the units of this division. The division's only got about a mile and a half of front. You'd think we could get on faster. Where's your barrage?"

"It takes a minute or two to figure the fire dope and lay the guns," said Eadie. "It'll take 'em some time to get started because they'll have to dope out what the rocket means."

Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed. The German fire, in view of the fact that the Americans were not advancing, began to slacken.

"Fire another rocket, Jake," directed Eadie.

"Which one?" asked Jake.

"Why the same kind that you fired the last time, hammerhead!"

"I don't know what kind it was," muttered Jake.

"Why, you picked it out of the book and then off the pile all yourself."

"Naw," grinned Jake slyly. "I seen the one you was going to put in the pistol, but laid down again when you give me the book, and I picked that one up and fired it."

"By ——, you're learning to be an observer, anyway," said Eadie. "Listen, nit-wit. The rocket you want is a yellow smoke. Well, hunt around in your pockets and see if you've got a yellow smoke. It's marked on the bottom of the cartridge."

Jake hunted, but after he had taken out all his rockets and laid them in a neat row in front of him, as Eadie had done with his, he could not find what he sought.

"There it is!" snorted Eadie, picking one

up and showing the words to Jake "*Fumée Jaune*" on the base of the cartridge. "It's as plain as the nose on your face."

"Aw what the —— does 'fumey john' mean to me?" cried Jake. "I'm a white man. I don't savvy no frog lingo."

"Shoot the rocket!" said Eadie.

Away went the rocket and while it was still in air shells began to burst in front. They did not form a hurricane of fire by any means, but they made a comfortable noise. Eadie, counting the bursts, decided that a battalion, three batteries, was firing.

"About ten minutes or so of this and we can advance again," said the captain cheerfully.

It is a heart-warming thing to have a barrage arrive in answer to a rocket. So many times a whole dumpful of rockets is fired and the barrage is non-existent. And other times the barrage lands in astonishing places, anywhere but where it will do good. But this one was well placed, it was enthusiastic, and the infantry watched it with pleasure. Between the barrage and the one-pounders and machine-guns the Germans would have to pull out, or be killed.

A half hour the barrage continued to play, then suddenly stopped. The infantry, without waiting for the order, sprang forward, struggled through some half-destroyed wire and found themselves in the intermediate position. It was empty. Reveting material, the woven brush and chicken wire that keeps the trench wall from caving in, was scattered about; sheets of corrugated iron, all peppered with holes, stuck up out of the tumbled earth. Dug-outs were caved in, bits of furniture lay here and there, with a few blankets, stick grenades, and a rifle or two. Of the defenders of the trench there was no sign. There were neither wounded nor dead, and the fire of the German machine-gunners, that had been so long quiet, once more began with redoubled fury.

"Well, let's keep going!" yelled the captain. "Don't stop here! They've pulled out, men. Let's get after them!"

The officers with the companies urged their men forward and the battalion climbed out of the rear wall of the system and went on.

The battalion staff followed the advance, hurried from one flank of the battalion to the other and directed the placing of the one-pounder when any place appeared that looked as if it might be occupied. The staff was not unwieldy, for it consisted only of Captain Lawrence, Sergeant Eadie, Jake and a runner from Captain Lawrence's company.

The captain alone sustained the advance. He pulled men from holes and shoved them forward with his hands. He personally directed the surrounding and capture of a light machine-gun that was all that was left of a strong-point organized in some artificially deepened and connected shell-holes. The captain had no tactical plan of advance. His only idea was to keep the men going forward. Their objective was still a long way off, but he had hopes of its achievement during the night.

At sunset the battalion had progressed to where they could look down a funnel-shaped valley in the woods on their left. It was a narrow gap, like a gun-sight, and at the far end of it was the sun setting redly through the smoke. This valley was strongly organized by the enemy, for the infantry now received a heavier fire than any they had yet experienced. Here Captain Lawrence was hit in the arm, but beyond putting on a bandage he paid it no attention. He was hit again five minutes later, on the same wrist, and the runner was killed.

"They've spotted the staff," said Eadie. "They can see us running around and waving our hands."

"Look at those —— in the hole over there!" cried the captain. "That's what disgusts me!"

He pointed with his good arm to a half dozen gallant defenders of democracy who had huddled into a shell-hole and, having allowed the advance to pass them, now began to timidly make their way out with every intention of breaking for the rear and safety.

"I'll fix 'em," muttered the captain. "Here, Sergeant, help me put a dressing on that wound; it hurts like ——. They tell me it's only the slight wounds that hurt. How about it? You've been wounded."

"I wasn't wounded," said Eadie, winding a first-aid bandage around the captain's wrist. "I was gassed."

"Do they let you wear a wound stripe for that?"

Eadie made no reply, but continued to wind the bandage. He made a knot, secured it, and tucked the ends under.

"Now then for these skulkers!" said the

captain. He drew his pistol and the three men started for the group in the other shell hole, some of whose members had already gone back.

"What organization do you men belong to?" asked the captain sternly. The men jumped at the sound of the officer's voice and looked sidewise at his pistol. They said nothing, but nervously clutched their rifles or began to fumble at their masks.

"We're all that's left of H company," said one man finally. "Our officers are all dead and we don't see what good we can do by staying here and getting killed."

"You can stop a bullet from killing a better man!" answered the captain. "Who gave you authority to run? This isn't the Russian army. You're a bunch of yellow ——." He put his pistol back in its holster. "I'll give you fifteen seconds to get back to the line or I'll give you the —— licking ever a man got. If I shot you some one might think you had died a hero's death."

"I'm not afraid of getting killed," said the first speaker, "but I am not going to be butchered. I'm no sheep; I'm an American citizen."

The captain strode forward and swinging his arm in a short jabbing motion, knocked the other man into a whimpering heap. The captain drew back his arm for another blow.

"Git!" he commanded.

Another voice spoke, a voice of steel, the hooting of an oncoming shell. Eadie threw himself down, hitting a rock and bruising himself badly.

SLAM! As if some one had hurled shut a gigantic cellar flap. A pause and then the sound of earth falling in shovelfuls. Down came stones, dirt, pieces of steel, sod, all kinds of débris, thudding on the backs of the recumbent men and rattling on their helmets. Eadie sensed that the captain was still standing and, turning his head to see, he made sure that he was.

"Get up!" directed the captain, "up and on your way!"

Eadie got to his feet, sniffing the smell of the high explosive for signs of gas. The captain's knee shook just the slightest.

"By ——, he's been hit again," thought the sergeant.

Some of the men in the shell-hole got to their feet, others only to their knees, and all looked at the officer. They were impressed. He had remained on his feet while all the rest had flopped. The captain opened his mouth to speak, but no words came. He clenched his fist and started toward the skulkers, but his knee shook again and this time it went out from under him entirely, so that he fell forward into the arms of Eadie and Jake, who laid him gently down.

"Where'd it getcha?" asked Jake earnestly.

"Never mind," said Eadie, "he's dead. I know by the way he feels."

Two or three infantrymen came cautiously over and watched Eadie fold the captain's hands and put his helmet over his face.

"What did he want to stand up like that for?" muttered one of them. "Can you tie that?"

"He wanted to show us he was braver'n us," replied another. "I tell yuh this place is a poor one to be brave in."

"Let's get to —— out of here," suggested some one.

The man who had been knocked down by the captain now came over to the group.

"What outfit do you men belong to?" he asked.

"We're artillerymen," said Eadie, "from the Third Division."

"Oh!" cried the other. "The —— regular Army! They shove us in here to crack the hardest nut in the whole sector just because we're men that can earn our living on the outside. These are the guys that want to shove us up against some more machine-guns!"

Jake was about to reply, but Eadie waved his hand to him to be silent.

"We don't give a —— whether you go or stay," said the sergeant. "There's a barrage of military police in back of you that a rat couldn't get through. And if they get their hooks on you you'll wish you'd been killed up here. This isn't my first scrap. I know what I'm talking about. I wasn't shoved into the Army with a bayonet, nor shoved on to the front lines with another one. If you were any kind of a man I'd lick you for what you said about the regulars, but as it is I'll give you a good kick if you open your mouth again. If it hadn't been for us you'd be wading around the Atlantic Ocean now to save yourself from being a Boche prisoner."

"Huh!" grunted the other sarcastically.

He hitched the sling of his rifle and looked around for his friends. They were some distance off, moving to the rear.

"Gwan," said Jake, "yuh better start runnin' now if yuh want to catch up with 'em."

"Huh," grunted the other man again. Then he turned with a sneer and went off in the direction the others had taken.

"There's a hero for you," observed Eadie. "He'll go home and be president of the Society of Veterans of the American Excavationary Forces yet. He's just the kind of a bird to shine in public life."

"I don't know but what he's right," said Jake. "We won't do no good to get killed. This outfit has run itself down like a kettled steer. Let's go."

"No, don't let go!" objected Eadie. "I want to just as much as you do, but there'd be too many explanations to make. And no alibi goes, either."

"Well, what can we do?" asked Jake. "We haven't got no officers."

"Jump in the hole," said Eadie. "We'll think it over."

HE SURVEYED the darkening battlefield. There was nothing to be seen that would indicate that some twenty thousand men were within a mile. There was nothing to see but the rolling ground, the black woods against the fading crimson of the sunset, and here and there, at scattered intervals, two or three men in olive drab, or the quick gleam of a bayonet.

Jake plucked at Eadie's sleeve.

"Sargeant," said he, "I'll never make a liaison guy, I can see that from this day's work. Sargeant, I'm goin' to resign. I been a hard-rock man all my life an' what I think of a skinner I could be hung for, but I'll go back to drivin' team an' welcome."

The sergeant apparently did not hear.

"Sargeant," cried Jake, "it's time you an' me was goin'. We're goin' to get ourselves killed!"

"Shut up, now," said Eadie, "I'm tryin' to think."

"Forget it!" said Jake. "I don't want to get killed today. I got some business to fix first. Sargeant, I made over my insurance to a aunt an' I'm sore at her now. I want to change my benifishary. Man, I'd roll over in my grave if I thought she had all that money. Lemme go back and do that an' you can kill me as many times as you want to."

"Nix," said Eadie. "We've got to hunt up some officers. If this outfit once establishes a line, then we can get out, maybe. They've been fighting all day and their officers have all been killed off. Also their nerve must be pretty ragged after seeing their dead so long. They might pull out and go clear back to the jump-off, and then how would we know where the line was when we were asked back at the outfit? Too many explanations to make, Jake."

The sergeant reached out of the hole and picked up the captain's pistol.

"I may need this before we get through," he remarked.

"Pigeon-blood!" exclaimed Jake. "It ain't our fault an' yet there's no way to get out of it. If I don't git killed, me an' the liaison detail parts company right off the minute we get outta range."

"Let's drag," said Eadie, "and see what we can see with the major's nice new glasses. The only way to go out with no questions asked is to get hit."

"Not gassed?" suggested Jake.

"No, not gassed, you big skull. Didn't you hear that crack the captain passed about my wound stripe? Don't get gassed, Jake; you'll regret it the rest of your life."

They began to make their way forward again, and Eadie had only taken a few steps when he stumbled against something hard and fell. He got to his feet, muttering, and began to feel about to see what had tripped him. His hand came in contact with a round cold object, a handle, then a long flat surface. It was the one-pounder gun, and as Eadie started on again, his hobnails clanked on the tripod. Of the crew there was no sign. They had abandoned their gun and gone to distant and quieter parts.

CHAPTER VI

LIEUTENANT CONNOR

THE first hour or so of the night Eadie and Jake passed in calling out to men they heard plodding by and asking them if they knew the whereabouts of any battalion or regimental command group. Sometimes the men did not answer, other times they said 'no'; at other times they laughed harshly and directed Eadie to find the deepest dugout ten miles back, prophesying that there would be a command group in it.

"These guys are all goin' back," Jake observed finally. "I'm for goin' with 'em."

"Let's wait a little," answered the sergeant. "You'll get just as much shell-fire and just as much machine-gun peeve as you will here. I'll give you another lesson in liaison. You see those flares that keep going up? Well, the Boche don't shoot those over their rear areas; they go up from the front line. And as long as they don't get any nearer, we're safe from getting gathered in."

"Unhook your ear from them machine-guns a minute," continued Jake, "and see what you hear."

"I don't need to," answered the sergeant bruskly.

In the daytime, when a man is hit, the medical personnel or the stretcher-bearers can see him, but at night this is not possible. The wounded have a very real fear of being left to die in the darkness and they give voice to their feelings. These men are not a few. After an assault they are strewn like leaves and their voices make quite a clamor.

Neither man spoke for a long time.

"That's my big fear," said Eadie finally, "to be badly wounded and left in this God-forsaken country for a day or two. What have you got to eat on you?"

"Hard tack and bully," answered Jake. "Look, why can't you an' me go back to that town an' get in the cellars of it, have supper, sleep an' come out again at daybreak?"

"Well, I'll tell you," replied the sergeant. "You're not deaf and you must have heard the cracks that every would-be humorist has been passing at me because I went away on a mission up there on the Marne and never came back. Well, they can all go to ——. My conscience is clear and I've got the old G. O. that says I can wear a wound stripe, but this stuff about goldbrick and jawbone wound stripe gets on a man's nerves after a while. This time I don't want any one to have anything to say. When we go out and I'm asked where I left the infantry, I want to be able to say the P. C. is at such a place, and the coordinates of the front line are X so much and Y some other thing, from such a place to somewhere else."

"I think you're a —— fool!" replied Jake. "How many men we seen get killed today? Bing! It's done. Look at that captain. He was going to be a brave boy an' not flop for the shell. I'll never get over the feel o' his blouse with the blood comin' through the holes in it out o' my hands if I live to a hundred. What's a wound stripe? Sargeant, a guy gets wounds in this war he'll take the scars of to his grave, an' he don't rate no wound stripe for 'em, either!"

Eadie silently unwound his slicker and overcoat from his shoulder.

"It's coming on to rain," he remarked. "Let's go back to that last trench and see what's in it. That crack that doughboy made about finding the staff in a dugout might not be so far off after all."

A cold drizzle of rain began to fall. The two men stumbled from shell-hole to shell-hole, working back to the trench system they had crossed earlier in the afternoon. It seemed easy enough just to turn around and go back, but after they had gone some distance Eadie decided that they were still moving parallel to the front, since the flares the enemy kept sending up did not grow any more distant. They met many men, all like themselves, hunting for something. Runners were trying to find companies; distracted machine-gunners with their weapons over their shoulders fell in and out of holes.

"You will note, Jake," remarked Eadie, as a platoon of gunners went thumping by, "that the guns those men are carrying are Hotchkiss and this division that we were with is armed with another type. Hence these gunners are from some other outfit and lost."

"Good luck to 'em," said Jake, "I got troubles o' my own."

"There are worse jobs than ours," said Eadie. "Those guns weigh fifty pounds each and the tripod weighs another fifty. How would you like to lug one all night and then find you were two divisions away from where you belonged?"

"Sargeant," replied Jake, "don't go borrowin' trouble. You needn't give me no lectures on liaison nor on nothin'. I'm an ignorant man an' I know it. This stuff takes too many brains. I'm goin' back to drivin' mules or diggin' holes or workin' in the kitchen. It's a whole —— of a lot easier on the nerves."

They finally found a road, one with high banks, and here they decided to wait for daylight. Eadie contributed a can of hard-tack and Jake some bully beef. This, with water from their canteens, made their first meal since the night before.

They dared not smoke. Once finished eating, they lay back against the bank and tried to sleep, their feet in the weeds of the ditch, and cold water up to their knees. Eadie managed to sleep at intervals. He was awakened first by a shell bursting. A second time men stringing wire fell over his feet and then started to roll him bodily into the ditch, thinking him a corpse. The fine rain drifted across his face and the wind now and again brought the crackle of machine-guns from up the valley to his ears. Once he heard the rattling of carts.

One-pounders, perhaps, or ammunition carts trying to find their companies. From the snatches of conversation he heard from time to time he judged that the drive had met with a heavy check, losses had been frightful, units had become hopelessly intermixed, every one was lost and many outfits had disappeared entirely.

The sergeant, some time in the early hours, began to dream. He was at home again, somewhere, before an open fire. He reclined in a deep armchair and inhaled the most delightful odors of broiling steak. How warm the fire was! He seemed to be all alone, he and the fire and the steak. He spread his limbs and reveled in the warmth and the red glow of the fire.

He began then to awaken, he could feel consciousness returning, but he held to that chair as hard as he could, he gripped the arms desperately to keep himself in that room. It was no use. He awoke, though he did not open his eyes. He was still in the ditch, leaning back against the bank, his hands deep in his overcoat pockets, his face upturned to the rain. No fire, no steak. He opened his eyes, feeling a strong inclination to weep.

It was quite light. There was a mist of rain over the distant hills, but in the foreground he could see a stretch of plain, ruins, and a hill with brush on the top. Tiny brown figures ran about on this hill and white smoke made a contrast to the gray mist. Some doughboy outfit had made an assault up there at daybreak.

A man groaned heavily at Eadie's side.

"Yuh 'wake yet?"

It was Jake, his eyes bloodshot, and a red beard beginning to make an untidy appearance.

"Yeh, I'm awake," answered the sergeant. "I wish I could have slept a little longer. I was dreaming about steaks and, boy, I could smell that steak just as plain as I can see now."

"Ahhhh!" groaned Jake again, getting to his feet. "Sargeant, I'm stiff as a poker." He stamped about in the road. "Well, I earned a dollar yesterday an' I'll earn another one today. I'll remark that they'll be the toughest two iron boys I ever made in my life an' I've made some tough ones!"

Eadie got stiffly up from the mud and took out the major's field-glasses again.

"We made one good haul yesterday and that's these glasses," he remarked, putting them to his eyes. "It was almost worth coming up here for."

He looked all around, but the mist and rain made visibility poor.

"You can put them things up," remarked Jake out of the depths of his collar. "I can see trouble with the naked eye. Lookit!"

He pointed with his muddy forefinger. In the lee of a little knoll about a hundred yards away was a group of men. They crouched close to the ground, but from time to time one would stand up and look at something with his field-glasses. These men were variously dressed; some wore the mackinaw issued to truck drivers and motorcycle men, one had on a long sheepskin coat, others wore trench coats, and two the long, old issue slicker of green oilskin. There was a continuous flashing of white paper.

These were maps being unfolded and folded again to keep the rain off them. Map cases were forbidden as tending to indicate officers to enemy sharpshooters, although an officer could be identified by a multitude of other signs.

"That's a staff," said Eadie, "and divisional by the size of it. Anyway, brigade. Let's go over and bring 'em the good news. They may tell us we can go home."

"Didn't I hear some one say something about being relieved?" muttered Jake. "There's a relief due us now, ain't there?"

"Yes," said the sergeant, "but don't bank on it and then you won't be disappointed. Baldy and Short Mack probably started for us after supper last night. They're as certain as pay day. We'll see 'em some time, but God knows when. All we need now is to get permission to go home."

They approached the group of officers and then Jake waited while Eadie, going on, picked out the man who seemed the least

occupied and asked him who was in command.

"What do you want to know for?" asked the least occupied man. He was young and trying hard to be military and grow a mustache, but with little apparent success in either direction.

Every head came up at the sound of the young officer's voice.

"Here, who's that?" cried three or four at once. "Who the —— do you think you are, there, Ducrot? What do you mean by delaying messengers? Here, soldier, what organization are you from?"

"Here, you," called the man in the sheepskin coat, "where's the 151st Brigade P. C.?"

"Do you know where Courlamont Farm is?" cried another.

A tall man with spectacles arose and walked over to Eadie.

"You've been in the fighting, haven't you?" asked he. "Are you a runner? Give me your message if it's for me. I'm in command here. Where did you leave your unit?"

"Sir," said Eadie, saluting, "I'm an artilleryman. I'm with the liaison detail."

"Oh! An artilleryman!" cried all. Some of them added obscene words expressive of their disgust. The man in spectacles looked at Eadie with distaste.

"What the —— do you want to bother me for?" he demanded.

"I'm due for relief, sir," answered the sergeant, "and I'm supposed to bring back the location of the troops I leave and any requests for fire on special targets they have. My own officer and the major commanding the unit I was with have both been killed and I wanted to report to some one responsible."

"Well, I'll give you a message for the artillery," said the other. He led Eadie a little bit to one side and pointed down the crooked valley. Far away in the mist rose a sharp-pointed hill crowned with white ruins. "See that hill down there? That's Montfaucon. Tell the artillery to shoot at it. All I ask of them is to shoot at that hill and to keep their —— shells out of my infantry. Now get out of here and don't bother me any more."

The two artillerymen went away across the shell-spotted field.

"What did they say to yuh?" asked Jake.

"Nothing."

Jake snickered.

"Brave boy, you only done your duty," said he.

The sergeant, looking about the landscape for some sign of a road, made a wrathful reply.

"I can't do it," grinned Jake. "I ain't built right. You crave a road? Well, I'll bet there's one in a gulch over there. Lookit way down the valley. Put your expensive glasses you robbed off the dead on that dark streak an' see if it ain't a column o' trucks. If we go down there I bet we'll find a road."

"It's trucks," said Eadie. "There's some kind of a dump there, ammunition or ration or something. It's a couple of miles, but let's go. We can get a ride back on one of those trucks. We might just as well have gone last night."

There was a bitter note in Eadie's concluding words.

"Ah," said Jake, "but we done our duty by stayin'!"

To this remark Eadie made no reply.

BEYOND the next field they had a much clearer view. The ground was flat, stretching away to a line of trees that marked the banks of the Meuse. All that country was criss-crossed by long, thin wriggling worms, brown worms, that moved sidewise instead of forward. The worms were infantry going forward to the assault. Eadie with his glasses could see stretcher-bearers, prisoner groups and isolated men, probably runners, working from front to rear of these lines. There was very little shell-fire and no indication of machine-gun resistance to the advancing lines. This would indicate that the front was some distance away.

"I don't know where we are," muttered Eadie, "and if we're in some strange division's stamping ground, we're likely to have trouble with the M. P.s before we get out."

"Let's get to them trucks," said Jake, "and we'll take care o' the M. P.s when we see 'em. They never bothered me a —— of a lot yet."

"Those trucks haven't moved an inch since we first saw them," observed Eadie. "There's something phony. I hope they won't be full of stiffs. I saw a wagon train once that had been caught by a barrage. That's one of the scars I'll take to my

grave that you were beefing about a little while ago."

When they came down to the road the two saw the reason for the stoppage of the trucks. There was a ration dump, a pile of boxes, quarters of beef and a mountain of bread. The road, a jumbled mass of brownish white stone, ended abruptly at the dump.

Farther on toward the enemy picks clanked and shovels thudded. A grunting, toiling mass of men in undershirts, heedless of the rain and the biting wind, were working frantically to extend the road still farther.

They dug and tore, and a steady flow of other men came up to them from a ruined town down the next slope. These men carried blankets, they shoved carts, even an old rolling kitchen with the top of the stove gone. They lugged boxes in their arms. The town was being transported bodily to the road, and of the stones of its houses a new roadbed was being formed. It is surprizing how quickly Nature destroys the work of man.

No traffic had traveled that road for four years and the only trace of it now was in the hardness of the soil the men had to turn up.

"Those are engineers," said Eadie, nodding at the gasping, shirted men. "They've been at that pleasant job all night, I'll bet. They claim the engineers are the highest branch of the Army. Well, I'm content with one of the lower ones."

"You an' me both," agreed Jake. "Where does truck drivers rank?"

Jake had been prompted to this inquiry by a wrestling knot of men. The truck train came up to the ration dump and then stopped. Far out of sight the long line of elephant-like shapes was immovable but not silent. Drivers and orderlies expressed their feelings pungently. And in the foreground the knot of men wrestled. There was a sort of circle built there, so that a truck could turn around, after unloading.

The road was not wide enough for two streams of traffic, but it was intended that the returning trucks should have one wheel on the hard surface, and being empty, they ought to be able to get out with the other wheel in the field. Many had, as a long ribbon of ruts testified. One, however, at just that point in the turn where it was squarely across the road, had evidently developed intestinal trouble. It was not bogged, for all four wheels were on the road, but it seemed to be immovable.

The crowd of men about it ceased to peer into its motor and ran to the rear to shove. No action. Again they adjourned to the motor. No action. They all went under the truck like bugs under a stone. No action. There was an officer there who raved and raved.

"He ain't much good," said Jake, "he just keeps sayin' the same thing over an' over. We had a little looey in the supply company that could speak to a truck. Boy, when he started we watched out that there was no gasoline lyin' around open."

More and more men kept arriving from down the column, each to add profane advice, but the truck still sat calmly in the road. The loaded trucks dared not leave the safety of the broken stone roadbed, for once they got a wheel in the mud, heavily laden as they were, they would bog to the axles. Up the road pick, shovel and rock hammer clattered ceaselessly.

Another officer appeared, wading along in the mud beside the road. This one made no remarks. He went up to the stalled truck, looked at its motor, went around and peered into the back, and then sent two men scurrying back along the column.

He himself went up the road and conversed with the engineer officer. The clink of the hammers ceased suddenly, and the officer reappeared leading a hundred or so engineers, to meet the two men he had sent away, who had come back staggering under a load of rope.

The officer who swore regarded these preparations with astonishment.

"Hey, what's coming off here?" he demanded.

"I've got a car back there," said the officer with the rope. "I'd kind of like to get through here some time."

"Well, we'll let you through just as soon as these idiots find out what's the matter with this truck. The guts of it came apart somewhere, so that we can't move it backward or forward."

"I can move it for you," replied the other calmly. "Just watch."

The engineers began to spread out, the hood was removed from the truck, and some other men, in response to a few short commands crawled under the truck and then were seen to throw ropes from the other

side. More ropes were brought, fastened to the far side of the truck, and thrown across the body. The ends of these ropes were carried into the field and the engineers tailed out on them.

"Whoa," cried the swearing officer, "you're going to upset that truck!"

"Ah!" replied the other officer.

The ropes were fast, the engineers were set, the calm officer blew his whistle.

"Yeh!" cried the engineers, heaving on the ropes. The truck creaked.

"Yoh!" they cried again. The wheels left the ground.

"YOH!" Up went the wheels, over crashed the truck, and the men, running hard, jerked the body clear of the road and into the mud, where it rested with its four wheels helplessly in air and bled oil and rusty water. The truck drivers all ran back to their trucks, the engineers filed slowly away to their picks, shovels and hammers, and the truck column roared with the sound of motors being speeded up again.

"You've ruined that truck," cried the officer who had sworn, "and you'll have to be responsible for it. These trucks are under my charge and if you come ranking in here taking things out of my hands you'll have to bear the consequences."

"There are twenty thousand men up there waiting to be fed," replied the calm officer. "I'd ruin fifty trucks like that and fifty men like you to get their food to them."

"You'll hear from this!" said the swearing officer.

The other made no answer, but went back along the already moving column.

"End o' the first act," commented Jake. "When that next truck is unloaded let's you an' me tumble into it. I can't figure out yet why we had to stay up in the rain all night and not go back when I said. We're doin' now what we would have done then."

"You don't get the idea," said Eadie. "We were still on duty last night. This morning everything is lost, our relief hasn't shown up, and I reported to some general officer. Well, he gave me a message and we go out. We had to have an alibi to go and as soon as we got it, outside!"

They went down to the pile of boxes, quarters of beef and loaves of bread where the first truck in the line had come up and was being unloaded. The fields were crowded here—prisoners trudging stolidly, men laying wire, stretcher bearers going back loaded and forward light, runners, and drifters, men whose mission if any was not apparent at first sight. Many of this concourse of pedestrians stopped and looked at the ration dump. They had the air of wolves about a dying buffalo. Eadie and Jake joined the circle. There was a man, a sergeant, who walked around and around the boxes, looking at the circle of men with hostile eyes. No one said a word.

Once in a while a man would bend down, the watchful sergeant would run to that part of the circle, and all the other men would swing a step closer. Cases of jam had become unheaded, perhaps by the journey in the truck or by being thrown to the ground. The men about the dump would circle around until one such case was located and then, the sergeant's attention attracted elsewhere, it was but a second's work to transfer a can from the case to an overcoat pocket.

The first truck went away, the second also and the third and fourth, yet Jake and Eadie still lingered. Eadie had three cans of grapelade now, and Jake a bulging pocketful of chewing tobacco.

There was a case of Red Cross supplies, sweaters and stockings probably, and Eadie wanted one, but the case was intact, and it was going to be difficult to get at its contents. The dump kept growing bigger and bigger, and all the more difficult to guard. The crowd also grew bolder.

Quarters of beef were going now, bread in bagfuls, whole cases of jam. There were fifty kitchens within a kilometer and every one had news of this dump and had sent over its most expert thieves. The sergeant who was guarding was nearly out of his mind. While he tore a carton of Bull Durham from a man's arms, a hind quarter of beef and a dozen loaves of bread would go from somewhere else.

"Come on," said Jake finally, "I'm gettin' cold. Let's get home. There's only one truck left and I don't want to have to walk all the way back."

Eadie, sighing at the thought of a warm sweater that he would not have, turned and started slowly toward the road, where he and Jake would have the best chance of hopping the truck as it made the turn and started back. Eadie had no idea of where

he was, but he hoped that he would come upon some elements, either of his own or the division to which he had been attached, and from these he could learn the location of his battery.

The plan had been for the relief to tell him the location, but he had seen no relief. The prospect of hunting a battery in this crowded section of the battlefield was not pleasing. If the police once got him all would be lost, for he had nothing to show his authority for wandering, and verbal excuses were of no avail whatsoever.

This last thought was chilling, but Eadie felt a sensation of discomfort that arose from some other cause. What was it? He looked around and suddenly discovered an officer, and this officer was looking fixedly at him. There was hostility in the officer's eyes.

"What the —— is eating him?" thought the sergeant. His "borrowed" pistol was in his holster under slicker and overcoat and its owner was dead anyway. The major's field-glasses were out of sight behind Eadie's gas mask. His overcoat and slicker were his own and all his clothing was in accordance with existing regulations.

"Who's that guy?" asked Eadie going close to Jake and muttering under his breath. "That shavey there that's giving us the mean once-over."

"Now where have I seen that mug?" mused Jake.

"He does look familiar," agreed Eadie. "Look, now, don't see him. Just walk right across the road and start back along the ruts. We can hop the truck anywhere along here. —— if I haven't seen him somewhere, but I haven't pinched anything from an officer since we were on the Marne."

"I know him, by ——!" cried Jake. "It's that shavey Connor. Some one left him on our doorstep at Mandres."

"Connor!" gasped Eadie. "He's the man that lost all our transport at Saint Mihiel. I haven't seen him since. He told me to take off my wound stripe, too. Well, he hasn't got anything on us."

The officer began to advance upon the two men, his face scowling and his mouth set grimly. Eadie and Jake fixed their eyes innocently on the distant hills and walked across the road. They heard the grate of hobnails on stone and knew that the officer had moved toward them.

"Here, you two," barked a voice, "where are you going? Halt there, —— it!"

They halted and the officer came up. His mouth was pouting and his face had all the expression of a spoiled naughty child.

"What are you two men doing here?" the officer continued. "You're skulking. Don't deny it. I saw you with my own eyes. Cringing down here and plundering and stealing. I've been watching you. I know you. You're the sergeant with the fake wound stripe and you're the drunken driver I put under arrest at Royameix."

The two men having nothing to say, said it. They knew they had but to let the lieutenant exhaust the vials of his wrath and they could go their way in peace.

"You two will stay with me," went on the officer. "I'll keep my eye on you. I'm going to prefer charges against you when I get back."

"Sir," said Eadie, "we've just come off duty. We've been on liaison with the infantry and we're going back with a message."

"What's the message?" asked the officer. "Show it to me."

"Well, sir, it's a verbal one."

"What is it?"

"Sir, the artillery is requested to fire on Montfaucon."

The officer gave a harsh laugh.

"I suppose they're to use high explosive, gas and shrapnel," he sneered. "Couldn't you think up a better one?"

"That's the one the general gave us," said Eadie quietly, "and we're going to deliver it."

The officer's brows came together and his lips pouted more than ever.

"Oh, Harvey! Step up here a minute, will you?"

A man detached himself from a group down the road and this man came up to the sergeant and Jake. It was another officer.

"I want you to hear this, Harvey," said Lieutenant Connor. He turned again to Eadie. "You will accompany me," he said coldly and clearly, "you and this other man. I order you to assist me. I believe you are skulking and I mean to keep you under surveillance until I can turn you over to the authorities for investigation. Will you come peaceably or not?"

The other officer, Harvey, looked nervously at Connor and more nervously at Eadie and Jake. His eyes shifted here and

there and he looked anything but comfortable.

As for Eadie, he felt a little sick. There was nothing that he and Jake could do. Connor had a witness and Eadie wasn't sure that Connor could not shoot him on the spot if he refused to go with him. Complaint could of course be made once Eadie returned to his battery, but that would avail nothing now. Jake said nothing. Eadie was the sergeant and it was up to him. The other officer muttered something about being in a hurry.

"Well, are you coming?" asked Connor.

"There's nothing else we can do," replied Eadie.

"*Sir!*" barked Connor. Eadie remained mute.

"Sullen devil, that," remarked Connor, turning to the other officer.

He led the way down the road a little way. Three enlisted men stood up as he approached. They were wet, plastered with mud, their eyes haggard. Each one had two huge coils of telephone wire across his shoulders.

"Each of you take two coils of wire," directed the officer to Jake and Eadie, "and follow me. I wouldn't try to run off. That's a little friendly advice. March in the rear, Harvey, and keep an eye on them."

The men, laden with the wire, began to stumble along past where the engineers dug up roots and pounded big stones into little ones.

"Eadie," whispered Jake, "you think we're goin' up near the front?"

"Sure are," said Eadie grimly.

"Then, by ——, I know a name that's goin' to be in the next casualty list an' it ain't mine, neither!"

"Now don't go shooting that officer," said Eadie. "That's not the thing. I won't have it." He walked away in silence. "A better way would be to wait until he's asleep and then we'll tie him to his bunk with a little of this wire, trickle some gasoline over him, then you and I snap cigaret butts at him until we set him alight."

"Man!" exclaimed Jake. "Where do you get your ideas? I wish to —— I was educated. Ever since I met you I been sorry I never finished grammar school."

"What outfit you guys out of?" asked one of the other men. He was tall and thin, carried neither rifle nor pistol, and his slicker was thick with mud. He groaned beneath the weight of two huge coils of wire.

"Seventy-ninth Field," answered Eadie. "Where are you from—the same?"

"We belong to the Signal Corps," said the tall wire-stringer, "attached to an' formin' part of the rootin' tootin' Third Field Artillery Brigade."

"You guys was too easy!" interrupted another wire-stringer. "Whyncha tell him to pound sand?"

"How the —— could they?" hotly demanded the tall man. "Didn't he have 'em by the nose? Direct disobedience an' the other shavey for a witness. In the face o' the enemy, too. Man, I know all about military law. It's tough chewin'. I was a witness once on a court martial down at Camp Greene."

"Yuh, but all he wanted 'em for was to lug wire!" protested the other man.

"What's all this?" demanded Eadie. "What are you two chewing the fat about?"

"Huh!" grunted the tall man. "Yuh see us? We're the last of a detail of ten. The reason we're the last is because we wasn't quick enough an' now we're up so far it ain't no use."

All the other men began to explain at once just how low, how unspeakable, how ripe for death by slow torture Lieutenant Connor was. They told how the detail had shrunk, one man diving into a dugout, another ducking into a ruined house, a third jumping a truck, others mingling with passing troops, and as soon as Connor discovered a man's absence, the others would be turned about and taken back to the scene. The only result of the search would be the finding of the man's wire which he had promptly abandoned. The time finally arrived when the men had respectfully pointed out to Connor that they could no longer continue the march unless they had assistance in carrying the wire, since each man was laden with a double and even treble load.

"An' about then," observed Jake, "his eagle eye fell on us."

"You said it!" agreed the others.

"Who's the other?" asked Eadie, indicating the younger officer.

"Name's Harvey. He ain't a bad sort, but Connor ranks him. He was to be observer an' Connor was to lay the wire. Well, I'm bettin' Mr. Harvey takes his foot

in his hand an' goes away like the rest o' the boys."

"That's what you oughta done," observed a muddy stringer. "So soon as you seen him lookin' at you or even sooner, you oughta squattered to —— across them fields as tight as you could go."

"We couldn't," said Eadie, "he knows us. He's one of A Battery's officers and we're out of that battery."

"Is that where he blew in from?" muttered the others. "Well, he's been keepin' close to the cellar entrance o' the First Battalion P. C. since yesterday A.M."

THEY walked on a way in silence, leaving the road and striking off across the fields. Shells bloomed into great flowers of black and yellow smoke and the distant rattling of machine-guns became every minute clearer and clearer.

Connor led the way, asking directions of walking wounded they passed from time to time, and finally they entered a small grove of woods, where the brush was so thick they were forced to go in single file.

Eadie walked with bowed head, shifting the wire from one shoulder to the other. He was terribly tired, and was beginning to be hungry again. He was mad. His mind held no other thought. He was just plain mad. And when he got back to the battery he was certainly going to turn this Connor person in.

Suddenly a bend in the path brought Eadie into the presence of a great many drawn-faced, muddy men. Connor was there, and Harvey, and a number of other officers, also many doughboys with bayoneted rifles. There were some wounded, too. It did not need Eadie's front line experience to see that these men had recently been fighting, and hard. Some were cleaning their rifles, others were inspecting their gas-masks, or sadly trying to piece together their torn clothes and puttees. Connor was already in conversation with one of the officers.

"It's useless to go any farther," Eadie heard one of the new officers say.

"But is there any one up there?" asked Connor.

The officers all looked at each other.

"Well, we don't know," said one. "There was an order from the brigade to retire. It doesn't seem possible that we could have had so many casualties in such a short space of time. The chances are that there are still a couple of companies up there that haven't got brains enough to come out."

"In that case," said Connor, "we'll be on our way."

"Whoa," cried all in one breath.

Three or four officers and half a dozen enlisted men began to explain to Connor that it was impossible to go any farther. That just beyond the woods was a stretch of open country under direct observation, not only from a ridge in front, but from the hills on the east bank of the Meuse. Eadie and Jake thankfully put down their coils of wire and sat on them, but they reckoned without their officer.

"I have orders," said Connor, "to lay this wire to the advanced units so they can ask for artillery fire when they want it, and so that they can direct the fire upon anything they please. Airplanes can't see because of the fog and balloons get shot down as soon as they go up, so wire communication is necessary and essential."

"Well, don't be in a rush," spoke up one of the officers. "If there is any one in front of us they will be back here pretty soon. There's no use laying wire and then pulling it up again. You'd only get half way out and meet them coming back."

"That's right," spoke up another. "Orders came out to fall back to these woods until nightfall. Naturally some of the outfits will take more time than the others, but they will all be back here within an hour or so."

Connor seemed to hesitate.

"What do you think, Harvey?" asked he, turning around. No answer.

"Harvey," cried Lieutenant Connor again. He looked here and there. There were bushes, their leaves dripping rain, wet tree trunks with water trickling down their sides, a stump with that curious cactus-like effect that a bursting shell gives to a tree. A group of infantry men were parcelling out an O. D. shirt for cleaning rags.

Another cleaned a machine-gun under cover of a shelter-half. No sign of Mister Harvey. Perhaps he had stepped back to speak to one of the wire-stringers. Yes, that must be it. Connor strode back along the muddy cowpath, past Jake and Eadie to the bush that hid the turn. On the other side of the bush was a further vista of wet woods and muddy path. There was no

Mr. Harvey and there were no wire-stringers. Just beyond the bush on the ground were six large coils of telephone wire.

Lieutenant Connor went back to Jake and Eadie with his lip pouting more than ever. The two latter sat on their coils of wire with faces free of guile. Jake chewed tobacco placidly and looked off into the woods, while Eadie scraped away at the mud on his puttees with a chip.

"Do you know where Mr. Harvey is?" asked Connor.

"No, sir," replied Eadie.

Connor was about to say something more, but as he glanced toward the group of officers with whom he had been talking he saw that they were grinning broadly. Many of the infantry had stopped work and were regarding Lieutenant Connor with amusement. The lieutenant's lip came out another quarter of an inch.

"Pick up your wire, you two," said he, "and follow me."

With never a glance to right or left, he stalked forward. As he passed the group of officers a gray-haired man stepped out and took his arm, walking along beside him.

"Listen," said this officer in an undertone, "you told Harvey that these two men were a couple of hard tickets. You've been cursing them all the morning. What do you suppose they'll do to you when you get up there in the woods with them alone? You'd better stay here with us for a half hour or so."

Beside the path a tarpaulin was spread on the ground and over it another was stretched to form a sort of tent. A dozen or so telephone wires went under this tent, each with a white tag telling from whence it came. Connor, without replying to the other officer, bent down and looked into the tent.

"Have you got a switchboard in there?" he asked. "Good. Hook on the end of this wire. I'm going to take the other end up to the advance units."

"Don't be a fool," said the officer. "The advanced units are all falling back. Harvey'll be back in a minute or two himself. He's just gone for a little walk."

"To —— with Harvey and you, too," replied Lieutenant Connor. The older officer went away without answering.

The wire was hooked on and the three men started forward through the woods, Jake unrolling his coil behind him. They passed a machine-gun, an isolated sentry, and then in a step or two, came to the edge of the woods and saw before them a long stretch of hill and meadow that faded out of sight behind drifting curtains of rain.

Here they halted. Lieutenant Connor put down his own wire and looked soberly enough at the field in front of them. It was deserted, but that was no sign that hostile eyes were not watching it. There was a lot of action in that waste of wood and meadow. A man had but to close his eyes to imagine himself at home in a busy section of a great city. There was a continuous rattle as of heavy vehicles over cobblestones, an endless stream of them, some moving swiftly, others at a deliberate walk. Overhead was the rush and roar of the elevated, a train moaning out of the distance and clattering by every minute.

Occasionally one heard the caw of a klaxon, as if it were in the next block, and then many more would answer it, like a flock of crows in a cornfield, or a crowd of angry chauffeurs delayed by a traffic policeman. What a shock to open the eyes again on lonely field, and far-away woods, and the slanting rain, and never a sign of road or house or man!

There was a sudden crackle from the underbrush that made the three men jump.

"There's a gun in there!" cried the lieutenant. He took two steps off the path and there, in a depression of the ground, were two men, covered with a shelter half, from one end of which their helmets protruded and from the other end a thin black rod, a rod that vibrated and coughed and emitted a light blue haze.

"Shut off that gun!" shouted the officer. The men paid him no heed, but the clip running through at that second, the gun stopped perforce and the officer could make himself heard. "What are you shooting at?" he cried.

"Them woods," replied the gunner over his shoulder.

"Are there Boche in those woods?" asked Connor.

"We ain't studyin' whether there are or not," answered the gunner. "We got to keep warm, anyway."

"Stop firing!" said Connor crisply. "You've no right to waste ammunition to warm yourselves. I'll see that your unit commander knows of this. Where is the P. C. here?"

"There ain't none," said the gunner sullenly. "There's a line o' guns along the woods here with orders to keep up a fire across the field so the Boche can't form for no attack. The P. C. is back at the telephone central."

"You aren't shooting at the field; you said you were shooting at the woods."

"Well, there's troops over there that way," replied the gunner.

"Oh ——!" groaned Eadie. He watched the lieutenant turn and leap through the dripping brush to a place where he could survey the field carefully. The sergeant thought of the time he had shut his eyes and imagined himself in a great city.

The rattling vehicles were machine-guns, the elevated trains, shells, and the clamoring auto horns, gas warnings. The fields might look deserted and the woods lonely, but there were men there, enough to populate any great city, two millions of men, and every one of them equipped to kill his fellow.

"Come on," whispered Jake, "let's you an' me duck now. We can jump into the brush and be gone. He ain't lookin', he's gawkin' at the fields."

"Naw," objected Eadie sadly, "he knows who we are. Those other birds were foolish to pull out. It'll be their neck if he gets back and turns them in."

"I've been thinking it's going to be our neck, too, when we get back. The infantry sure made a big advance during the night. We must be a mile or more farther north than we were when we left the lines last night. Suppose we'd gone back and reported the front line at such a place and it was a couple or three miles farther north! Boy, the Old Man would have had a rush of words to the mouth!"

"Let's go another clip, Joe," said the machine-gunner. Joe accordingly inserted the clip and when its length had clattered through the gun, the two men in the hole sighed luxuriously.

"What's all the comfort about?" asked Eadie.

The machine-gunners grinned. They were absolutely hidden in their hole, only their necks protruding from the shelter half.

"We got our shelter half set up around the gun," said the loader, "an' when it gets chilly we just let a clip go and the barrel heats up under the tent. It's got steam heat stopped a mile. An air-cooled gun ain't so bad in the winter-time."

"Boy," agreed the gunner, "let Davey do his ——est. We got a system here we're gonna get a patent on when the war is over. Rain an' snow ain't nothin' to us. Lookit, you better get a doctor for that looey of yours; he's clean off his nut. If it wasn't so comfortable in his hole I'd get out and give him a stomach full o' teeth. You could be witnesses he went bugs an' tried to kill us."

"He's harmless," said Jake. "He ain't got nothin' the matter with him except he was born with a overgrowth o' bone in the head an' he ain't been able to get shut of it since."

The conversation ended then, for the lieutenant came back.

"Pick up your wire, you men," he said. "There are troops out there, they've got a blinker going."

All craned their necks and sure enough, on the far side of the field was a pale light that winked and flickered in the dots and dashes of the Morse code. There were troops out there with a portable battery and a signaling lamp and they were sending back details of their position.

"Come on!" said the lieutenant. "Where's that sergeant?"

"Here!" answered Eadie. He came crashing through the brush from a short distance away, stowing something in his slicker pocket.

"What's that?" barked the officer.

"I picked up a couple of cans of beans and some canned coffee over there," explained Eadie. "I saw a rifle sticking up butt foremost and thought there might be a little eating matter around."

He nodded in the direction from which he had come, where several rifle butts showed above the bushes. The bodies of men who fall in wheat or high brush are so marked, so that the burying detail can find them.

"Do you mean to say you plundered some bodies for that food?" cried the officer.

"Why, no. It was in his haversack and—"

"Put it down!"

"—they'd taken off his pack to see how bad he was hit. I wouldn't touch a stiff for a cartload of canned beans."

"Put it down!"

Eadie dropped the can and fished out two more from his pockets, which he also dropped. The machine-gunner reached a long arm from his pit and gathered them in.

"Tie your wire on to the other end of that man's coil and go ahead. Only take one coil apiece," directed the officer. Then he led the way to the edge of the field.

Crossing that field was a lot like taking a cold bath—the worst part of it was getting in. Eadie was to lead, uncoiling his wire, and Jake, whose coil was nearly gone, was to follow. Last of all came the officer with another coil.

The three of them lay down and wriggled out into the wet grass, Eadie pushing his coil of wire ahead of him, and then turning over and dragging it after him as he shoved himself along the ground with his heels.

The collar of his slicker acted as a plow, and mud, bits of grass and water worked down his neck. The coil of wire caught in depressions of the ground, it became tangled and kinked, but Eadie could not sit up to straighten it out. They had scarcely left the woods when they crawled along in the shelter of a very low fold in the ground, a fold not two feet high. Dirt had blown from the top of this fold into Eadie's eye.

It was a steel wind that had blown that dirt, and for that reason Eadie kept very close to the ground. The enemy were evidently in such a position that they could not sweep the surface of the ground with their bullets, but anywhere between the woods and the men who had flashed the blinker there might be a zone where the bullets skipped along about six inches from the grass. Though the chances for arrival in such a zone were very good, the wire detail kept on. Eadie's blood boiled at the thought of the lieutenant and the way he and Jake had been tricked into carrying the wire. He raged and swore to himself and forgot his fatigue rehearsing the complaint he was going to make when he got back to the battery.

From time to time, when a shell-hole or a wrinkle of ground gave them the opportunity, the men would take a cautious survey and, having secured their bearings, they would go on again. They had about six hundred yards to go from the woods, six hundred yards of wet grass, shell-holes and mud. The place was strewn with blankets, packs, and empty bandoliers, but they passed no bodies.

"Halt!"

The three crawling men complied. A far-away voice had called to them and they waited to see what the voice would say next. Meanwhile they would stay halted, for the unseen challenger might have weak nerves and a machine-gun with a hair trigger.

TO BE CONTINUED.

A STEAMBOAT INCIDENT

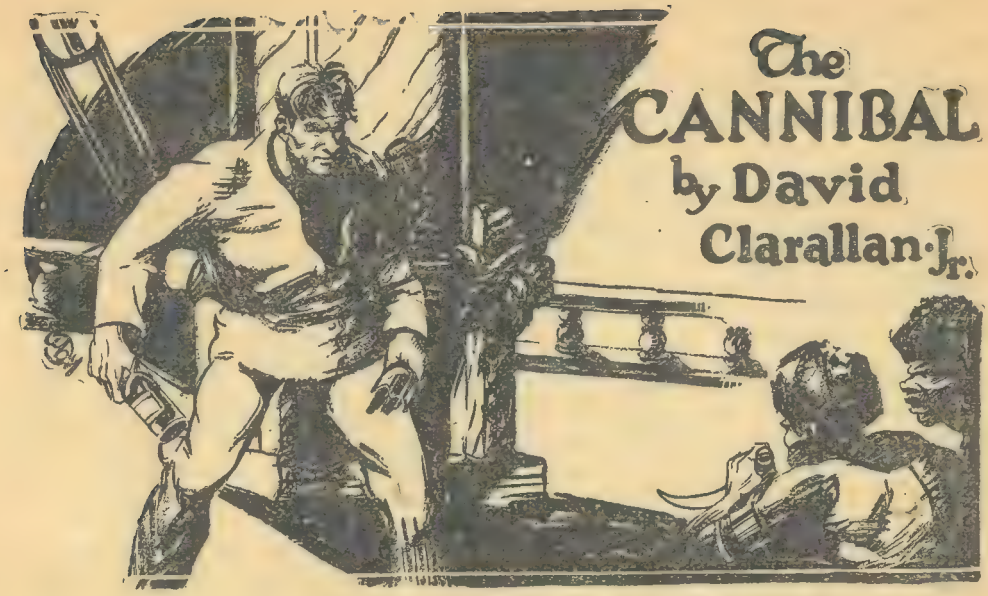
by **J. R. Johnston**

THE rivers of the Middle West were the chief highways of travel in the thirties and forties, and steam boats were much in vogue. It was the custom for all but the wealthy passengers to save part of their fare by helping to "wood the boat." This operation consisted of carrying wood down the bank whenever the steamboat docked and throwing it aboard. For this a special ticket was issued at a reduced rate.

Freight, of course, was carried at a much smaller rate than human baggage. Learning of this, an Irishman, boarding one of the Western steamers at St. Louis, asked the price for transporting 150 pounds of freight. Being told the usual amount, he stated that he would go as freight.

"All right," said the captain, and he turned to a member of his crew. "Put him down in the hold, Jack, and then lay some flour barrels on him to keep him down."

The Irishman decided to pay full fare.



The CANNIBAL

by David Clarallan Jr.

SCATTERED through the islands, from Singapore to Torres Strait, you will find a race of hardy old sinners whom even the East can not kill. Lean, withered, cautious old scoundrels they are, and their bald heads, so carefully guarded from the sun, are heaped storehouses of past iniquity. Once these wrecks of humanity were bold youngsters on whose adventurous careers empires were built. Today they sit quietly on verandas overlooking the sea, coddling their infirmities and bewailing the modern degenerate influence of law and order. They recall the days when there was only the law a man made for himself and order was something a fellow asked only of blacks.

So recalling, some of them come to the story of Peter Hull. At this one alone of all their queer tales they shake their heads, for even to these old sinners cannibalism—cannibalism in the midst of plenty—is a horrible thing.

The old gossips, drawing for your entertainment upon their memories of violence and romance, assure you they would never have believed the fantastic yarn, had not young Hull, immediately after that last frightful cruise, sold his boat at a ridiculous price and disappeared forever from the islands.

Well, these old men know much, but not everything, and it is time the story of Peter Hull was divorced from the fables that have grown up around it.

First of all, he shrouded his activities in a cloud of ostentatious mystery that would have been amusing if the man himself had not been so disagreeable. Our resentment of his manner prepared us to believe anything evil of him and we were not long in hearing it. The day he came to Macassar he threw little Tom Morrison, runner for the Heymans, clean over the side of his brig. So much was seen from outside; Morrison told a pretty tale of friendly advances met with insane fury; Hull said nothing. Actually the young captain had found the runner peering into his cupboards and drawers to get a better idea of what his potential client might buy.

Our acceptance of Tom's version was a queer thing in itself. All Macassar knew him to be an incredible liar; no one would have trusted him with a dollar, but it was Hull's fate to be one of those men of whom stories are told and believed.

He arrived, unheralded, in one of the fastest, prettiest brigs the islands ever saw, and that was another queer thing, for it is an axiom of the sea that a smart ship means a smart master and a lively crew. But in this case he was a morose, drunken devil and they were a dirty lot of Papua niggers, as alien to the brown natives of our parts as to the white European. They had one

advantage which in Hull's eyes outweighed their poor seamanship and ugly persons. As foreigners, they kept strictly to themselves and were not likely to do much talking about where they had been or the sights they saw.

Their master had become what he was as the result of pique, hurt pride, stubbornness. Like many another of our group of exiles, his presence was accounted for by a family quarrel, a quarrel which reached its climax when old Hull in a fit of gouty anger told his son to go to the ——.

Peter came out to us, and for him it amounted to about the same thing. He had a little money of his own, bought the brig in Sydney and sailed her up to Thursday Island for the pearling. From the cosmopolitan criminality which foregathers there he heard of opportunities to be seized in our archipelago, perhaps an opportunity of meeting the devil at closer range.

However, the pet demon of the East is brandy, and Hull was on intimate terms with it before he got to Macassar. In fact, he had renamed his brig just before leaving Thursday, and in scholastic irony Latinized the mark of his favorite brand. So it was as the skipper of the *Tristella* that he was introduced into our society. With him came Schroder, picked up God knew where, a wisp of a Dutchman dreamy with opium and possessed of the fatuous silence of the confirmed drug user.

We had all heard of the Morrison incident before we saw Hull in Loo Jack's place, and we watched him with even greater interest than we usually accorded the rare strangers in our midst. We saw a big fair chap, ludicrously young, in dingy ducks moulded by long wear to his powerful muscles. A scraggly growth of immature whiskers intensified the ugliness of the glum scowl which disfigured his regular features.

He picked out a table as far removed from the others as he could and called for brandy with an eagerness which led some of us to fear that he would soon be weeping out his secrets on our shoulders. We did him an injustice; he was not that kind of a drunk. The more he took, the more sullen he became; the angry glances with which he met our curious ones were challenging, but he only spoke to curse the boy who served him. He drank the bottle dry in half an hour and walked out, steady as a church, steadier than any sober man could be. We revised our estimate of his loquacity, and also of his longevity.

"A year'll do for him," Oscar Larsen pronounced gravely. "These young fools that take their liquor in the daytime and rush out into the sun ain't long for this world."

A month later Jim Collins added emphasis and variation to the prophecy. Jim, nursing his steamer through a nasty gale, saw the *Tristella* storm by, all sail set, careening through the waters like a wounded shark. Enveloped in a cloud of rain and spray, she had vanished before Jim could close his mouth.

"It fair made my hair curl to see him crowdin' her along," Jim reported. "You'd thought the blighter was carryin' the blessed mails. I'll bet what you like he'll be shark's meat before the year's up."

After a time, though, we rather lost interest in Hull. He scarcely exchanged a dozen words with any one except his very shady agents while he was in port. He pronounced Loo Jack's best brandy hogwash and imported his own, drinking it all alone aboard his brig, a proceeding which earned our contempt and Loo Jack's hatred.

But there was bound to be some talk. The *Tristella* brought back remarkably small cargoes, yet her agents were offensively obsequious in dealing with their young client. The authorities apparently had no suspicions—anyway it was known that Hull pursued his trade in Portuguese territory, so why should the Dutch worry?—but it was part of a trader's business in those days to keep an eye on island politics.

We all knew that Karala was getting restless. He was one of the influential chiefs of the Portuguese islands and pretended a great affection for white men from Dutch Macassar. Some of us had good reason to suspect that he was piling up a hidden reserve of rifles and ammunition; we also had our suspicions about where he was getting them. We were right, though our only evidence was the reticent nigger crew, Hull's own blatant aloofness and the mate's scared expression—the expression of a man haunted by fiends.

Schroder used to come ashore with his teeth chattering in his yellow face and his pipe-stem legs trembling. He would sigh a curious mixture of anguish and relief, for though he was mortally afraid of a Portuguese jail—probably he knew more

about these cells of horror than his commander—he was spiritually afraid of the *Tristella* and Hull, so much afraid that he dared not throw up his berth.

Hull never took in a scrap of sail until long after his mate was certain the masts would be down. He drove the vessel at the narrowest gaps in the coral reefs or over the most treacherous bars without taking soundings. Then for days together he would remain in his cabin, and no one dared go near him until he finished his brandy bout and emerged, pale, with bloodshot eyes and unkempt beard, remarkably steady of hand and diabolically uneven of temper.

This cabin was another of his peculiarities. The real master's cabin on the *Tristella* opened off the cuddy, but Hull rarely went into it. Instead he built a sort of pilot-house aft so he could stick his head out and abuse anybody that happened to be on deck. Next the door he kept his cases of brandy, too many to put inside, but at the first sign of heavy weather he would have the liquor secured safely below.

The men of the *Tristella* meant nothing to Captain Peter. He knew nothing of Papua, its people or its traditions, and he did not care much. It was enough for him if his unlovely crew worked the brig and leaped fearfully at his faintest signal, though their black shanks knocked together and their teeth rattled in their large mouths. He delighted in inventing new tasks for them, and the *Tristella* was cared for like a yacht.

WE WERE not a timid lot in those days, but none of us, I think, would have driven a native crew so hard. Not that we were more humane; we weren't, but we were more prudent. The Papuans were not well known in our islands; indeed, little enough is known about them anywhere, even yet. Papua itself, huge and dark and damp and vastly unexplored, has nothing in common with the dreamy isles which the Malays call home. Fantastic stories have come from the depths of Papua, and her people partake of her mystery. Few adventurers have returned from her strange jungles, though many have entered. Most of them have left their bodies roasting for the black man's dinner and their heads ornamenting the black man's doorpost.

Jim Collins, who had been up and down on this earth more than most of us and was, besides, a kindly soul, undertook to explain some of this to Hull. Collins professed to see more in the young fellow than the others.

"He's like a pup that's been kicked and doesn't know why," the steamer commander once remarked. "The pup acts mean, but if you look close, you'll find he's a lot more puzzled than he is riled."

The two skippers met one day in the customs shed and walked together toward their boats. Only that morning Collins had seen one of Hull's black rowers make a swift gesture toward his knife behind the white man's back. So Collins decided to barge in on what was none of his business, for he was one of those chaps who never shrinks from telling a man the truth simply because he's pretty sure to resent it.

"I don't want to offend you, Hull," he began, "but I'd like a yarn with you."

"Well?" Hull turned his big head quickly and glared down angrily.

"Get rid of those blacks of yours," Collins urged. "They're a nasty lot and they hate you. I don't know anything about your ship or your business," he spoke more hastily, for he saw fierce rage gathering in his companion's eyes, "and I don't want to. But if you're wise you'll get a Malay crew."

Hull stopped in the middle of the white dusty road, obviously searching his mind for contemptuous phrases. He could find no language strong enough to express his feelings.

"I can handle 'em," he snapped at last, and walked abruptly away.

He still moved steadily, Collins noticed. He still handled his big frame with the graceful power of the athlete. But over his great muscles had crept a layer of fat, not enough to impair seriously his marvelous strength as yet, but symptomatic of the flabby deterioration that would one day make of him a huge, soft, useless hulk—if he lived so long.

He knew very well what the other traders thought of him. But he had chosen his road and with the obstinacy of youth he kept to it; given any encouragement, he would have fastened just as tenaciously on a high and noble ideal. At this time, which he was to look back upon with shame and disgust, he gloried in his reckless folly. Whenever he left Macassar he told himself:

"This trip you'll get caught or smash up

on a reef." If he were drunk he would add defiantly, "And I don't give a ——!" Usually he voiced the defiance.

No doubt he started off on his last voyage in the same spirit. As usual he gave a few misleading hints about his destination; as usual he departed, unregretted; as usual he brought the *Tristella*, many days later, around a high point of land and saw Karala's retinue waiting for him on the beach.

Now, it is an undertaking of diplomacy to do business with a Malay of distinguished lineage, for they have developed trading into a ceremonial with a ritual. To make it worse for Hull, Karala, like all rebels, was a romanticist; he looked upon Hull as his ally, his friend, risking liberty and fortune to aid the cause.

The unloading of the *Tristella* was, therefore, accompanied by much polite conversation. Hull went ashore for an hour's exchange of florid compliments. Laden with unwanted gifts he returned to the brig, followed at a decent interval by the chief and his staff, gorgeous in gaudy sarongs and glittering ornaments. More politeness, more compliments. It bored Hull beyond words, though another man might have delighted in the exotic courtesy with its colorful background. The white beach, on which the lesser lights of the village clustered, shone dazzling in the sun. The palms which fringed it only partially concealed the native huts, teeming with a happy domesticity. The headlands which shut the village off from the world bulked richly green on either side.

Hull did not glance at any of this nor, when he at last slipped out of the harbor, did he look back. He growled a few orders, hurried to his cabin and eagerly poured a brimming glass of his heart's desire. Schroder, little as he relished the responsibility of command, smiled as he heard the clink of bottle against glass.

For two days the mate had a rather bad time of it. Hull naturally avoided the usual routes of travel, except when he was ostentatiously doing a bit of honest trading. The first few days out from Karala's village he always followed a tortuous channel among a group of flat, uninteresting, uninhabited islands. Even if he were spotted here, no one else knew the channel well enough to chase him.

It was dusk of the second day before Hull came on deck. Schroder dived below immediately, and his captain, looking across the sea at the angry red disk of the sun, swore unintelligibly at the helmsman. All day the wind had been light and capricious. Now it was failing altogether; he was in for one of those accursed calms that so often in our shallow seas delay the course of wind-propelled commerce. There was nothing to do but watch the sky deepen from blue to purple and from purple to black. Gradually the sails sagged limply and hung motionless; the cheerful murmur of the brig's passage through the water grew lower and lower and finally was swallowed in the silence. The only sound in all the world was the scuff of the captain's slippers on the deck.

THE short tropic twilight was ended; the sails bulked hugely black against a lesser, steel-specked blackness which was the sky. It was heavily hot; the perspiration beaded Hull's face and his sleeping suit was already beginning to cling damply to his body. It was difficult to breathe in the thick air, especially with the discomfort of a drinking bout still weighing down his spirit. The black at the wheel was a statue, his hands resting on the spokes, his body shining glossily under the binnacle lamp. Up forward a faint padding of bare feet showed that his companions were awake.

Hull wondered at this. Sardonically he told himself they were blasted idiots for not getting what rest they could; he gave them little enough chance. Wearily he supposed it was too hot for even a nigger to sleep. Not that it worried him; he was in a lethargic mood, pleased that he did not have to move, glad there was no occasion for speech or thought. He simply leaned comfortably on the rail and stared down at the water, dully black against the ship's side, shading off to the east into an ebony sheen. Timidly a segment of moon crept up out of the sea and shot a beam of silver across the flat, calm water. But still there was no breeze.

The blacks forward were audible now. One voice rose and fell in monotonous singsong discourse. At intervals the others interrupted in a low murmur, then the orator would go on. The talk, so unusual on the *Tristella*, vaguely disturbed the white man and he turned his head, squinting to

obtain a clearer vision in the faint moonlight. He could see only dark blots of men hunkered on their heels in a close group, but he could not distinguish the speaker. He glanced at the helmsman and surprized the man's eyes fixed on him. They had lost their dull opacity and were lighted by a strange gleam, quickly extinguished as he turned his head.

The spark of intelligence, the first Hull had ever seen in a Papuan, connected itself in his mind with a picture he had once seen, a single star shining faintly in a cloud-filled sky upon a sea of tossing waters.

The fancy passed, replaced by an uneasy fear which surprized and angered him. He told himself the niggers, babbling so queerly, were to blame, but he did not go forward to enforce silence with the kicks and blows of which he was usually so prodigal. He was afraid. He thought of calling Schroder, then laughed at himself for imagining that poor creature would be of any use if the niggers did mean trouble. He had a drink to quiet his nerves, finished the bottle which stood on his cabin table, and emerged refreshed.

At last he heard the faint rustling overhead which was the wind. The air, less oppressive, stirred against his cheek and the voice of the sea awoke as the *Tristella* slowly forged ahead, the water swishing and slapping gently along her sides. One of the blots in the group detached itself from the others and padded aft to relieve the wheel. Hull stood beside him a few moments, then stepped forward a few paces to watch the crew.

Suddenly the canvas overhead shivered and snapped, sure sign of careless steering, and Hull swung round, his mouth filled with choice oaths for the helmsman. The man was not there. He had moved up so that Captain Peter swung round right into his face, close enough to see the man's eyes shining—but this time Hull did not think of starlight—close enough to see a shadowy arm uplifted, to see something glitter in the fellow's hand.

Hull flung himself to one side, so the descending knife ripped through the sleeve of his sleeping jacket, grazed his arm and threw the wielder off balance. Before he could recover Hull's fist swung hard on the black temple; the knife dropped to the deck and the helmsman sagged limply down on top of it.

The rest of the crew, shrilly guttural in the throbbing, awful yell of the human pack, were running swiftly aft. Blind instinct led their master to seek shelter, his cabin, though it would only have been a trap. At the same time he looked about for something, anything that would serve as a weapon. He found it piled up in cases beside the cabin door. Brandy, Peter Hull's pet devil, became his guardian angel that night.

A number ten foot opened the top case with a single kick; its owner stooped over and when he stood erect again he clutched a bottle in either hand. The first of the blacks was only a few jumps away when Hull let fly. The missile got the fellow full in the chest and drove him staggering back. The next bottle found its mark too, and the mark collapsed with a grunt of pain.

For the next few minutes Captain Peter gave an excellent imitation of a circus knife-thrower. The bottles flew from his hand with almost expert skill to crash on black heads or break with sharp reports on the deck. The pungent fumes of the brandy hung heavily in the air; the decks were wet with the stuff.

The bolder spirits among the attackers, rushing in fearlessly, put their bare soles down on the broken glass and fell back, howling. And still Hull stooped over his cases and flung his alcoholic grenades. Only two men got past the barrage, and them Hull stopped with bottles that were not thrown. The two bodies lay quite still at his feet.

But there is an end to everything. The bottles and the crew's pugnacity were exhausted in the same moment, and Hull, his last two missles in his hands, confronted an irresolute huddle of savages. There was a moment's pause before he sprang forward with flailing arms. The moon, an arched eyebrow of surprize, saw him go absolutely and completely berserk. His last bottle smashed promptly on two hard skulls, but feet and fists now served his purpose. A few timid knife thrusts only goaded his fury as he drove his terrified crew, now quite certain their captain was very much a devil, up and down the decks.

At last he quieted, tired rather than satiated, blood dripping from half a dozen cuts, his sleeping suit reduced to a few gory, sweat-stained rags. Weary but triumphant, he breathed deep of the brandy-flavored air, forgetting that ships must be

steered. The *Tristella* reminded him by a gentle, almost apologetic, crunch as she slid over a reef and ran her nose hard and truly aground. A convulsive shiver of every rib and plank and spar and she was motionless.

As though thrown up by the shock, Schroder popped on deck before the captain had quite taken in his predicament. The mate's thin hair was tousled in ludicrous stacks, his mouth gaped as he regarded his blood-streaked commander, the disordered decks and their peculiar tilt. Then slowly his face cleared; Jacob Schroder knew the limits of possibility.

"Captain," he murmured, and even managed a feeble smile, "Captain, I've smoked the stuff now for twenty years, and I swear to you I never had a dream like this before. It scared me."

Having thus put the product of his drugged imagination in its place, he quietly returned to his bunk. Hull decided to follow his example; he would sleep below with the door locked and a revolver under his pillow. But first he examined two bodies which still lay upon the deck. Both dead, he found, the one with skull smashed by a bottle, the other with the haft of a knife sticking up from between his shoulders. In the general fracas one man had satisfied a private vendetta.

Both bodies had disappeared when Hull, announcing his preparedness by a shot in the air, came on deck in the morning. But something else had disappeared too, the captain's regular morning bracer. Peter Hull missed it most agonizingly. His wounds, all shallow cuts, smarted amazingly; his head ached; his mouth was dry and fuzzy and his stock of nerve-quieter had evaporated from the decks. The mate, after the fashion of drug users, did not drink.

THE island on which they were stranded promised no relief. It was only an elongated mud bank a mile or two long and perhaps a hundred yards across. A few tilted palms stretched their necks from the farther end where the land rose a few feet above the surrounding swamp, from which the morning sun was drawing thin wisps of vapor. Around them stretched an array of similar ugly flats, dark blots partially hidden by the low-lying mist. There was no help to be expected from this desolation; worst of all there was no chance of getting a drink without floating the *Tristella* off to a more hospitable resting place.

In the next few days Peter Hull tested to the full the quality of his soul. All his being cried out for alcohol and there was no alcohol. The first afternoon he drove his shaking crew ashore, threatening horrible tortures if they dared set foot on the brig without his order. Then, alone with Schroder, he treated that inoffensive Dutchman to such an exhibition of delirious rage that the mate fled to join the blacks ashore. Hull yelled gibes and curses after the man until he was out of sight among the palms. Then quite simply the captain wept.

Still sobbing he tottered into his deck cabin and picked up the glass from which he had been drinking the night before. A sticky dampness, exuding a most delicious, tantalizing odor, clung to it, and Peter Hull went mad again. He tore out drawer after drawer, seeking the liquor he knew was not there; he descended to a fierce attack on Schroder's cabin and left the place a total wreck, his quest still in vain.

At evening Schroder came down to the water's edge to reconnoiter. Hull whipped out his revolver and fired at the mate, but his hand shook so badly that a hit would have been a miracle. Schroder retreated rapidly, but his captain had found an outlet for his frenzy. Until it was too dark to see he stood by the rail, firing madly at anything that moved.

The next two days remain only as hazy blurs in Peter Hull's memory. The Papuans may well have believed an unchained devil had taken complete possession of the *Tristella*. They remained as far from the brig as their tiny island would allow, and left Schroder to venture timidly to the shore every few hours to see if the captain had anything but curses to give him. And on the third day Hull awoke, weak and unhappy, but reasonably sane. For some time he lay quite still, remembering where he was, and when he dragged himself on deck he discovered that water can be taken internally with refreshing results. When Schroder came down, anxiously calling "Captain Hull, Captain Hull," he was able to show a lined, bloodless but sober face over the rail.

"You're not looking well, sir," was the mate's only comment.

"Neither are you," Hull grunted, for Schroder, deprived of the drug which meant

more than food to him, was a sorry sight.

After a decent interval they examined the wreck, Hull went ashore to collect the crew and within the hour the awed blacks were feverishly at work. As they worked upon the lifeless ship, their commander worked upon his soul. He threw out the devil of alcohol—he could not help it—but then he fought and downed the devils of pride and anger. In their place he adopted a new devil, the devil of homesickness, but this one, to which he surrendered as abjectly as he had once surrendered to brandy, was a merry devil that made him happy.

The desolate, low islands basking under the blazing sun seemed the most delightful scenery he had ever seen. The sea, he was sure, had never before possessed this brilliant, enticing shade of blue. He almost developed an affection for the blacks and actually did find admirable qualities in the miserable Schroder, for the mate, seeing the change in his skipper, produced a gift of narrative, combining delightfully people and things with the grotesque figures of his drug-induced dreams. Hull learned to sleep as he did not remember sleeping before, and found he could awaken with a zest for life in place of the old dark-brown taste.

The *Tristella* floated at last, and Peter Hull, the new, ran her home with a laughing folly that was worse than his old sulky wildness. There was a lot of heavy weather knocking about just then, and Hull welcomed it. But at last the anchor chains rattled in Macassar harbor and Hull clapped his mate joyously on the shoulder.

"And now for home," he cried, waving toward the mail steamer anchored a hundred yards away.

The next sound was a long ragged splash. The two white men leaped to the rail in time to see a score of fuzzy heads bobbing in the water. The crew of the brig *Tristella* had ended their voyage and were leaving to the white devil their poor wages and equally poor belongings.

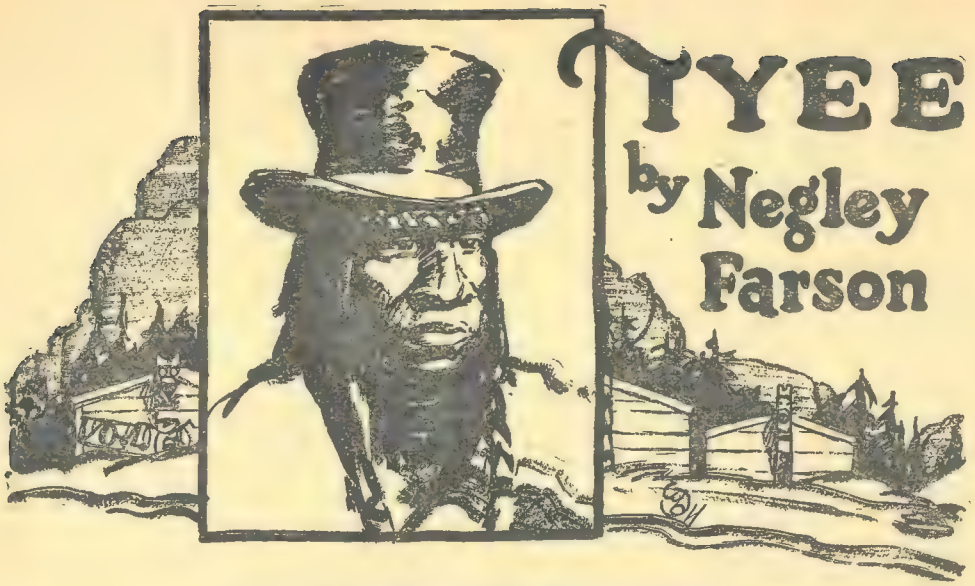
It is a mistake to consider subtlety as a product of the civilized mind solely. Nowhere on this earth will you find a lower specimen of humanity than the Papuan. Yet it was a subtle revenge that Peter Hull's black boys took, subtle enough to make his name a synonym for depravity in the East. By the time Hull had finished with his agents the story had spread all over town. Those two missing blacks? They had been killed and—the dead men's comrades would whisper the rest fearsomely and with many a backward glance—eaten by the devil of a captain. A cannibal, a white cannibal!

Even Macassar was slow to believe that. It couldn't be; such things didn't happen. Macassar waited for Hull to clear himself. And then suddenly Hull was gone, gone with his guilty conscience, gone without a word of denial or explanation. Macassar's faith in white virtue, such as it is, faded and died, for there were only two traces left behind the vanished man, and these, Macassar submits, mean nothing if they do not mean that Peter Hull knew he was forever degraded in our eyes and had fled to begin anew, Macassar piously hopes, a better life. The two traces were broadcasted by the clerk in the cable office. The first was a message from young Hull to old Hull.

"I've been to the devil and back again," it read, a guiltily cryptic message, you must admit.

The other was even shorter, a two-word answer.

"Come home."



Author of "Four Annas," "The Common Grief," etc.

WHEN Foley came to Joe Peach and told him that it would be better if he dropped out of sight for a while, Peach suggested the woods. Foley laughed.

"What's a fat slob like you going to do in the woods?"

"Oh, lots of things," said Peach, ramming the half of a dollar cigar down his throat, "lots of things. I ain't going to work, if that's what you mean. Not papa! But I s'pose the woods is as good as any place else if I *have* to take a vacation. Shouldn't last very long?"

"It'll blow over," said Foley, "but they're pretty hot now—an' it's just as well if you sort of fade away until they cool off. Got any ideas?"

"Yep—the MacDonald. I'll take the Indian job."

"Can't do that; we got a man already there—old Haggerty, you know—Ernie's pa."

Peach grinned.

"He's too old. Bring him back here and give him a desk job in the office. He don't care."

"He might."

"Well, anyway, I want that job, an' it's a fat state of affairs, after all I've just swung, if the boys are going to hold out on me like that. Whatcher trying to make me —the goat?"

Foley deliberated a moment. It was tough luck on old Haggerty, but then Peach was "inside."

"All right," he said, "get the office to bring him back down. I guess we can fit him in some place."

"Sure, give 'im a recorder's job—what the ——'s the difference to him! Pay's just the same."

So Haggerty came down from his remote post in the Indian country and Joe Peach went up.

The policeman who saw him entering the boat turned to a friend and said—

"There goes nothing!"

"What's the matter?" asked his friend. "Thought he was one of the bunch?"

"Yeah," growled the copper, his weather-beaten face turning red; "but he's the guy that bumped off Tommy Mason. Didn't do it himself, of course—he ain't never done nothin' himself—but he's the bird got it done. The ——!"

"I wouldn't say those things if I was you," warned his friend.

"I ain't," said No. 2764, "but there ain't a man on the force that don't know it."

IT TOOK Peach five days to reach the MacDonald, the last two of which were done in an Indian dugout. The agent's house was on the hill behind the Haida village—just a

string of unpainted board shacks, like poor stables, opposite the falls of the river. Peach had known that the MacDonald was the loneliest station on the coast, but he hadn't bargained for anything quite so desolate as this. He turned to Mead, the occasional government interpreter, who had come down the Island to meet him.

"Any other white men around here?"

"Just you and I," Mead smiled, "and a chap that lives on the lake at the head of the river."

"What's he like?"

"I don't know. Hardly ever lay eyes on him from one year's end to another. We aren't very sociable here."

Peach surveyed Mead, who, he had been told by old Haggerty, was a remittance man, getting two dollars a day as long as he never came home—and rather fond of the bottle. The last thought cheered Peach—

"Well, I guess we can keep company ourselves. Uum!—gosh, but this place has a stink!"

"Salmon," explained Mead. "They just chuck the heads and guts in the river—and some of them don't float away. That's all they live on, you know."

"Phew!" Peach pulled out his case. "Here, have a cigar—we gotta stop this."

There was a little shriveled man standing at one side of the bank, a battered Stetson pulled well down on his nose. Mead waved to him to come over.

"That's Old Leo," he hastily mentioned to Peach. "He's the Tyee, chief of this tribe, and he is not a bad fellow."

Peach shook hands with the Tyee and gave him a cigar. The Tyee took it without any change of expression and then suddenly began speaking to Mead in Chinook, a language of which Peach could every now and then catch a word, but whose meaning he could not understand.

"What's he saying?" he asked.

"Oh, it's nothing to do with us," answered Mead, "at least not with you. It's about an old Siwash who is sick— I'm a sort of pill-doctor you know to these chaps—keep 'em fit."

Peach, somewhat piqued over this casual reception, suggested that some one get his stuff up to the old agent's house.

"Oh, we can lug it up ourselves," said the remittance man, "no use bothering these people about it. I—I can make a couple of trips."

"The —— with that!" exclaimed Peach. "Get a couple of boys."

When this had been done, and the new Indian agent and Mead had moved off up the hill, Old Leo returned to the motionless line of Siwash who had been perched, more like buzzards than anything else, on the high crest of the bank. In his hand he still held the unlighted cigar—he held it up and examined it carefully—then he looked after the shapeless form of Joe Peach, at that moment entering the old agent's house, then he shook his head and sat down and began to eat the cigar.

"WHAT beats me," complained Peach, "is what old Haggerty did!"

"We used to collect butterflies."

"Butterflies!" exclaimed Peach, "butterflies? What for?"

"For our collection. I dare say we have one of the best on the continent. I'll show them to you, if they interest you. We have a—"

"Butterflies!" Peach was still a little bewildered, as if some one had just thumped him on the head. "A couple of old soaks like you chasing butterflies!"

Mead was silent.

"What else did he do?"

"He collected legends of the Siwash. These people are very interesting, you know. Many ethnologists claim that they are affiliated with the Japanese—theory is that a Japanese junk was blown to this coast about a thousand years ago, and that these people are direct descendants. These fellows are pretty pure up here, as this tribe had held this part of the world for centuries. They've got a lot of the original native still in them—funny beliefs—for instance, you could never persuade them that if a woman ate salmon eggs she wouldn't be turned into stone."

"Ha! Ha!" Peach, who was nicely seasoned over the evening's whisky, laughed brokenly: "Ain' tha' a —— fool idea!"

"They believe in animals, too—gods, you know. There's a tribe down below here's got a wolf for its totem. They believe in *Tootooch*, the Thunder Bird, who carried whole whales up to the top of this lake for his dinner. They say you can still see the bones." Mead halted. "I've been up there and seen them myself. But I know that they are just the bones of a fossil or—

or something like that. This tribe here has the salmon for its totem. The *tyee*, you know, king salmon, they go up to one hundred pounds. Their totem pole—"

But Peach's snore showed that he had not heard. And Mead was just as glad because it's not pleasant to sit talking to some one who always grins at you as if you were some sort of idiot; and, besides, Peach did not understand. He poured out the last of the whisky, drank it neat and made his way to the door.

The light from the oil-lamp cast a golden aura about him and made its way for a little distance out into the night; then it was lost in the abysmal, almost preternatural, gloom of the primeval fir forest. A forest that in that silence and darkness seemed to have unfathomable depths and things which no man had seen. Mead looked up and saw floating across the stars of the sky a great black cloud which had just the shape of a bear.

He shuddered and looked back at the bottle of whisky to see if by any chance there was a little still left. Then he lurched hurriedly up the shadow-flaked road toward his hut.

THE salmon run was particularly good that year for the Haida. *Tyee*, cohoe, and dog salmon all came in their turn, almost packing the swift waters of the MacDonald on their way to the spawning beds. The Siwash stood on the spearing platforms that jutted out over the fast-sluicing current, and sent their shafts, like showers of arrows, into the green pools of the backwaters where the great fish rested before making their final rush at the falls. Their spears were almost as ancient as their beliefs—eight-foot shafts, forked like a "Y" at the tip, with a little steel barb on each point. These barbs were held by a lanyard to the main tip of the shaft and came loose from the tip when it was shot into a fish. The other end of the spear was retained by a slim and tough lanyard made fast to the little finger of the right hand of the spear-man. He hung on to this, allowing the swift current to sweep the struggling fish toward the bank, where it was hauled out by yelling, yelping Siwash boys, who yanked out the barbs and threw the fish up on the bank to the *klootchmen*. The *klootches* gutted and smoked—and threw the offal back to the river. On the still days, when the sun was hot, the little camp lay in a fetid pool of incredible stench—

Dead or spent fish that had already spawned floated down, to drop over the falls, catch on the shallows and rot in the sun. Gulls and ducks screamed and flew back and forth up the stream, fighting, tearing, gorging themselves on the decaying flesh.

Peach came down to look at it occasionally, moving about in a sort of elephantine fashion among the squat, flat-faced Siwash, but he complained to Mead that he could not "stand the stink."

"Well, it's a great drama," said Mead. "There's something rather epic about it—these millions of fish that come up here every year from the sea. They come just like the rains, or the seasons—just like clockwork. The Siwash can tell you almost to a day when the first king, *tyee*, salmon, will run. Then they're comin' up by the million. Think of it—millions of fish coming up from the sea, back to the same beds they were born on—to spawn and then die!"

"But it's got to stop," muttered Peach, who had been watching some *klootchmen* gutting the last of the "dogs."

"Stop?" Mead looked bewildered. "Why it's Nature!"

"Oh, I mean this fishing here," Peach grunted sullenly, "all this slaughter going on above tidal limits."

"Slaughter! Why this is the food supply of these people! The Siwash can't live without salmon. And they can fish anywhere that they please—it's their Treaty Right!"

Peach pulled a paper out of his pocket and held it up before Mead.

"Ever see that before?"

On official stationery, below a government letter-head, Mead read:

> Owing to the serious diminution of the salmon run and the virtual destruction of the Big Run on the Frazer, it has been decided to increase the protection of run on the way to the spawning beds. In order to effect this it is considered necessary to persuade the Indians to forego their rights to fish above the tidal limits.
>
> They will be suitably repaid for such loss as this might occasion and in order to enable them to supply themselves with adequate gear to obtain their food supply from tidal territory—

"That is murder!" gasped Mead.

"It's an order," said Peach, "and it's been

lying in Haggerty's desk since last May. That's the kind of government servant *he* was!"

This was Peach's chance to get back at Mead, whose frequent praise of the old Indian agent had not gone well with the new one—the comparisons always seemed to be the wrong way about. Also, it provided an opportunity to do something which had been perplexing his soul—to prove to his old cronies back in Government House—who were probably chuckling over the fact of Joe Peach being forced to hide in the woods—that it was a pretty thin situation if a man like Joe Peach couldn't make something out of it. He could shake down the Siwash as easily as any one else.

Mead had been thoughtfully kicking at a stone.

"Well, I did see it!" he at last blurted out; "Haggerty and I talked the —— thing over together and, but we decided not to do anything with it."

Peach overlooked the "we" in his desire to discover why it was that Haggerty, old tottering Haggerty, would dare to disregard a government order.

"We thought it would be useless," Mead explained; "Old Leo and his people would never understand it—it would be the same as signing their death warrant to agree to anything such as that. And then Haggerty said that if we did nothing, the government would forget all about it—the MacDonald, you know, is such an off-the-map sort of place. And he was right; it was forgotten, until you came."

Peach now remembered the "we," and used it sarcastically:

"Well, *we'll* do something about it right now!"

Mead looked up.

"*We'll* speak to Old Leo, and see whether he agrees to it or not."

"But you don't understand! Old Leo—"

"An order is an order," said Joe Peach abruptly; "and the sooner these stinkin' Siwash get hep to that, the better."

"But it's murder! You don't understand—I tell you Old Leo can't move his whole tribe, babies, *klootchmen* and all forty miles every way, every run. It's simply—"

Peach was grinning.

"Who said it was murder? I ain't got no grudge against Leo. You just said yourself that this place is off the map, so to speak. Well then—" he started laughing—"Say, Mead, there's more than one way of killin' a cat."

THE conference was held before the "house-so-big-that-one-has-to-shout-to-be-heard," at the foot of the totem pole with the great grinning *tyee*, king salmon—the Haida's god—looking on. It was a breathless sundown, the smoke from the fires rising up from the lodge smoke-holes like white feathers; and if it were possible for any human being to be absolutely motionless, Old Leo achieved it. He squatted there like some small wizened image, monkey-like. Mead talked long and earnestly.

"You're his friend," Peach had pointed out to Mead beforehand, "and so you might as well advise him to do what I say. If he doesn't, I'll call in the Mounties—and then *none* of us gets any cake!"

Old Leo nodded at the end of the sitting to signify his acceptance. The Haida would sell out their rights for ten thousand dollars. He would sign the government paper. Mead would interpret it for him.

"And, boy," exulted Peach, as he and the remittance man walked back up the hill, "if I can't knock down a couple of thousand out of this I'm getting old—that's all, I'm getting old."

"How?" wondered Mead.

Peach explained that with the letter he was going to write he would set the price at twelve thousand dollars. "It might be a bit more," he added thoughtfully. "Some of the boys down below will probably want a cut—just to keep 'em quiet, so to speak—but it's two thousand bucks for your uncle."

"It's not fair," said Mead. "I must tell you, Mr. Peach, it leaves a nasty taste in my mouth."

"Forget it," chuckled the new Indian agent. "Ain't that old monkey getting ten thousand dollars dropped in his lap—just given to him?"

"But their fishing!"

Peach now laughed out loud.

"Say, do you think I'm the kind of bird to take that two thousand for nothing? Let 'em fish—ain't I boss here?—and who the ——'s going to stop 'em? Beats me," he added wonderingly, "why old Haggerty never thought of a simple little gadget like that."

Mead gave a quick little glance at the fleshy pink face.

"Haggerty," he said slowly, "was rather a simple-minded old soul."

"Must have been," said Peach. "Chasin' butterflies!"

MEAD'S fears that perhaps Peach had acted too quickly, without even consulting the government, and that there was the possibility that they would repudiate his offer of ten thousand dollars—and the two thousand dollars—were put at rest by Peach's explanation of "how things were worked!" It left Mead with even a worse taste in his mouth, but with the uneasy conviction that Peach knew what he was talking about, at least, as far as the government was concerned. And in due course the money arrived, in gold pieces, under the escort of a little fellow named Jones.

"Indeed to goodness," exclaimed this little man, as he stepped out of the dugout, "this is Fairyland!"

"And who are you?" answered Peach.

"My name is Jones—David Jones, of—

"I expected some money," said Peach.

"Yess," said David Jones; "it is here—in that bag—and it iss heavy!"

Peach leaned over the high side of the dugout and pulled out the government sack. With a nod to Mead to accompany him, he walked off up the bank. Mead, with a hasty "See you later" to the astonished David Jones, hurried after him.

"I don't like this," exclaimed Peach, when they had passed out of hearing; "I don't like a snoopy little bird like that pokin' about. Did you notice that when he was talking his eyes were rovin' all over the place, just as if he was winking. I think he's a 'tec!"

But the fact that the newcomer was not a detective—or else was an extraordinary versatile one—was ably demonstrated when the two men returned to the river bank. David Jones, with his cap turned the wrong way about, was standing behind a huge movie-camera, grinding furiously. The Haida, with worried looks on their faces, were mulling about in front of their huts, diving in and out, and taking frightened peeks at this strange thing with one eye that whirred like a salmon's tail when it jumps.

"I take pictures," he answered Mead's query. "I want the aboriginal in his virgin surroundings. I haf never seen a place such as this—this will be wonderful."

Peach laughed with relief—

"Tourist bait—what?"

David Jones looked perplexed.

"Gwan!" said Peach, nudging him; "it's the railroad. I understand. Here, have a cigar."

"D'you think," said David Jones, "that they could be persuaded to dance?"

"Dance? Ha! Ha! Well—I—should—just—say—they—would! Wait till Poppa gives 'em their Christmas present!"

"Oh," said David Jones, "do you have a tree?"

"Ha—" Peach choked on his laugh and turned round to glare at David Jones darkly— "Say, young feller, are you tryin' to be funny with me—?"

"Oh, no. Oh, no!" hastily apologized Jones, "I—"

"Well—don't!" said Joe Peach.

THE actual transfer of the money and the getting of Old Leo's mark on the document, which he could neither read nor understand, but which he signed trustfully at the bidding of Mead, was accomplished without any difficulty. It was too simple, as Mead afterward expressed it to Peach. He had expected a last-minute refusal—Old Leo clinging fast to time-honored customs.

"And you can tell him," said Peach, as they walked away with the deed well in hand, "that he can have a *potlatch* this year if he wants it. I'll wink a blind eye."

"Thank you," said Mead, thinking it perhaps better not to tell Peach that, although it was strictly forbidden by the government, the Haida had always held an annual *potlatch*. He and Haggerty had always found that they needed a shooting trip up the lake just about that time of the year. So the Haida were allowed to carry on their mysterious rites unmolested, and the dance of the bear, and the wolf, and the great *tyee* salmon were not looked upon by alien eyes. Mead had been told by Parsons, the hermit who lived on the lake, that they danced the *hamatsa*, the ancient cannibal dance, with human skulls painted red.

The first intimation that Peach received of the *potlatch* was the sudden and unannounced arrival of some Charlotte Bay Siwash; a string of them came winding out of the forest one morning as if they had been sitting there all the time, although, as

Mead explained to him, they had cut across from the other side of the island and must have climbed over the main range and through jungle that no white man had penetrated. They were rather savage, dressed in vivid colors. Old Leo's tribe, who usually went about in tattered slacks and red sweaters, had put on its best finery to meet them. Some of the old bucks were already painted.

David Jones was almost drunk with the spectacle.

"Indeed to goodness," he exulted to Mead, "this will make my fortune whatever. Haf you seen the little man in his topper?"

Old Leo, whose four-score years took him back to the great days of the Company, was receiving his visitors in an old Hudson's Bay factor's beaver.

Other Siwash appeared, poling their dugouts up the swift river. Their high-prowed craft lay like huge fish on the shore. These men were canoe-men *par excellence*, and as such were even shorter and squatter than Old Leo's Haida. And through it all moved the massive figure of Peach, laughing here, cursing there, making himself as much of a nuisance as possible. Whenever he could he stepped in front of Jones' camera.

"It provides a contrast," he said to that infuriated photographer, "Civilization and the Savage." To Mead he said, "Couldn't have had a better alibi if I'd planned it—nobody could say I wasn't friends with the Siwash after seein' me pallin' about with 'em like that. Besides, I ain't never seen myself on the screen."

This last remark was probably the real reason; and matters came to a point where David Jones looked to scan the horizon fearfully for the dreaded figure of Peach before he would take any pictures.

OUTSIDE the "house-so-big-that-one-has-to-shout-to-be-heard" were some giant cedar pillars. With the lateral beams that formed a line on their tips they looked like the great monoliths of Stonehenge, or some monstrous Siwash pergola. Mead explained to Peach that these were old blanket-racks—

"And where he unearthed them from I can't understand, but Old Leo has about two thousand dollars' worth of 'four-stripe' Hudson's Bay blankets in the lodge there. I suppose he thinks that this will be his last *potlatch*, and he's going to give one that will go down in history."

They heard the drums going as they were having their dinner.

"*Chug! Chug! Chug! Chug!*

They sounded exactly like a freight locomotive toiling up grade. There was something very ominous, sinister in its unpleasing, heavy beat. Three little volcanoes of sparks belched out of the smoke-holes of the "house-so-big-that-one-has-to-shout-to-be-heard," and danced like red stars over the black huts of the Haida. To an imaginative Celt it presented a primitive, most savage picture; but to Peach, nicely seasoned with whisky and the lion's share of the three pine grouse they had for dinner, it suggested amusement.

"Let's go," he said to Mead. "Got your ticket?"

Mead grinned feebly at this joke.

"I think we ought to stay where we are. It will only make them uncomfortable if they see white men looking on. Matter of fact, I don't think they will even let us go in."

"Hunh! Won't they—well, just let 'em try."

David Jones also backed up Joe Peach.

"It would be a rare sight to see them in all their finery and feathers. Come now, man *bach*, don't let us down."

Mead consented; and the three white men—even Peach must have felt it—picked their way gingerly among the sleeping mounds of the ponies and apologetically knocked at the lodge door which would admit them into that strange world so immeasurably different from their own. Their knocking was unheard amid the din of the drums, and Mead pushed open the door—

It was a step back of thousands of years. In a caldron of fire and pulsating shadow a sea of barbaric faces confronted their gaze, a phantasmagoria of feathers, tinsel and paint. A riot of color and monstrous design—primitive, ferocious and unlike anything a white man could have imagined. Wolf, bear, eagle and panther; each tribe wore the symbols of some heraldic totem. Half a thousand throats strained to a wild, unearthly chant; hundreds of hands drove wood against wood, or furiously beat upon yellow skin-drums. Crazy silhouettes leaped about the base of gigantic fires. And through it all the great moan of the cold

draft being sucked through the planks of the "house-so-big-that-one-has-to-shout-to-be-heard" and up through the smoke-holes above.

"Flames—and the faces of fiends—it might have been hell!"

David Jones stared at this madness before him, this reincarnation of the time when animals had the faculties of men and told himself that he—a white man—should not be carried away by such savagery.

"But, do you know," he whispered to Mead, "it stirs something inside me. I can hear the music now in those beats. It's familiar. I wonder if our people ever danced with a mask o' wood strapped to their face?"

Mead nodded slowly, and then attracted Jones' attention to Peach. The three had gained a position on the bench just behind the first line of drummers. And Peach sat staring over their heads with a perplexed frown on his face, as if he couldn't quite make things out. His cigar had gone out.

Each tribe had brought its professionals along, their fancy dancers, and each set or single dancer went the entire round of the hundred-foot quadrangle. One by one they hurled themselves into the fiery arena —whirled, jogged, or capered their round of the four walls of tense faces. And one by one they collapsed at the end of their task, were hauled back over the cedar rail, and allowed to sob out their frenzy. Then the next dancer, who had already begun to live in his part, flung himself into the glare of those three roaring pyres.

The drum-beats and hammering, the hoarse throaty cries, the very torrents of sparks in their swords to the black smoke-holes above, changed to accord with the dance. All the world seemed to throb, jerk or sway with that black figure outlined in fire.

Old Leo stepped out. Old Leo, chief of the Haida, danced to the great god of his people—the *tyee!*

The drum-beats and hammering, the hoarse throaty cries stopped abruptly—and only his own tribesmen, the Haida, gave queer little moaning grunts as he swung across to the fires. There he danced—knees outward, arms crooked and raised, like a frog. It was an uncanny interpretation. Then he swayed, and waving and wiggling he came down past the three roaring fires. This was the great king salmon coming up from the sea—the *tyee.* The Siwash swayed and moaned, and an old *klootch* rushed out to throw himself on the sands.

Danced by a young buck in his prime there would have been something very disturbing about such a performance, incredibly savage—but with doddering Old Leo it came perilously near the ridiculous. The weight of the goggle-eyed wooden mask seemed too great for the old Tyee's head; and he tottered past the three white men, swaying drunkenly.

This broke the spell Peach had been under all evening. This was reality, what he had come there to see, something funny. He laughed. He roared and pounded his knee—

"You idiot," Mead was shaking him roughly, "you everlasting —— fool!"

Peach struggled to free his arm from Mead's furious grip; and, failing to do this, became angry himself.

"Leggo my arm! Leggo, I tell you!"

He realized that there was something very undignified about all this—being made a show of before all these —— stinkin' Siwash!" But in all his career he had never been manhandled before and he was a little terrified by Mead's earnestness. Mead was cursing him horribly.

David Jones interfered. His voice seemed to recall Mead to the present, to what he was doing, for he dropped Peach abruptly and stepped through the staring Siwash drummers, to disappear from the lodge. Jones, and then Peach, followed after.

Old Leo, like some weird little monster, had stood there watching all this from behind the blind eyes of his grotesque painted mask.

"Do you realize what he's done?" exclaimed Mead, when David Jones had finally joined him in his cabin. "He's made a fool of Old Leo before nearly every Siwash on the island. He has been laughed at before his own people! Do you know what that means? Why, he might as well cut his own throat as take that lying down. His own crowd will murder him!"

David Jones was frightfully upset by all that had happened; he had expected to get a great picture of the *potlatch* on the morrow.

"I'm sure I don't know. I was all ready to feel a knife in my ribs—but they didn't seem to mind very much?"

Mead frowned.

"It might interest you to know that ten years ago Old Leo shot at the government surveyors who came here on his land."

"But that was ten years ago."

"Yes," said Mead, "that was ten years ago."

"Indeed to goodness," exclaimed Jones, "Peach said that he and Old Leo would be drinking out of the same bottle tomorrow."

THAT Peach made good his boast was made visibly evident the next morning when Mead saw him wandering about among the Siwash in that drunken orgy which usually follows the first night of a *potlatch*. Having a good thirst himself, Mead could understand to what length a Siwash would sink his grievances to secure a long drink of that soul-cheering fire-water which the white man was prevented from selling him. But he felt genuinely ashamed when he saw Old Leo, barely able to stand on his legs, taking a long swig from the bottle Peach handed him. This was degradation, indeed!

"It's Damon and Pythias now," said little David Jones, who had come over to where Mead stood apart from the Siwash. "Indeed, they are now going off fishing together!"

"*Fishing?*"

"Look you into that pool down there, man *bach*—there's a fish in there as big as a man!"

Mead saw now that Old Leo held a fishing spear in one hand, and that as he talked with Peach he was gesticulating and pointing across to the spearing platforms.

"It's a *tyee*," said David Jones, "a king salmon.

"You're crazy!" said Mead. "The *tyee* run finished two months ago. There isn't a *tyee* alive this side of salt water."

"Well, it's there," replied Jones, who announced that he must run for his camera.

Mead walked around Old Leo and Peach and went to the edge of the bank, and there, sure enough, in the limpid green pool at the base of the gray rocks was a gigantic *tyee*. It was an unspent fish, not even pink, which fanned with its huge tail to hold the shelter of the backwater before charging the falls. As he watched it edged out the trifle which would bring it into white water, but them with a flip shot back again, and seemed to rest there in the clear water as if floating in air, its fins working lazily. It was by far the biggest *tyee* he had seen—a perfect god of a fish!

Peach and Old Leo came walking toward him and, not wishing to have any more to say to Peach after last night's unpleasantness, he withdrew up the bank. He sat down at the end of the long line of Haida and visiting Siwash who were perched there in an absorbed contemplation, more like a row of huge buzzards than anything else. They seemed to be waiting for something.

While Old Leo was adjusting the lanyard, David Jones came past Mead with his camera and set it up on the spearing platform above the one Peach was on.

"How about it?" asked Peach.

David Jones nodded that he was ready and Peach stepped out on to the rickety platform. He leaned over to get a good sight of the fish and then raised the spear—Mead felt an almost uncontrolable desire to cry out, to tell Peach to come away from that platform, there was something sinister, terribly wrong about this—but he waited too long.

Even as he yelled, because call out he did, Peach heaved down the spear. He poised there for an instant, looking down in the river, and then with a terrified scream seemed to dive into the rapids.

"*Tyee! Tyee! Tyee!*"

As if the sudden disappearance of Peach had been a signal, the Siwash about Mead suddenly roared into life. With a sick dread he ran to the bank—Peach was gone—and as Mead reached the end of the village clearing, where he plunged into the thick bush of the river bank, he saw Old Leo—dancing like a fly at the foot of his totem.

He found Peach after a hard fight through the undergrowth, wedged head down between two rocks, with the green flood swirling over him. He was quite dead.

"It was the mighty fish," said David Jones, startled, wild-eyed, that evening. "It was the mighty fish pulled him over!"

"Perhaps," muttered Mead. He did not tell Jones that both of the spear points were still fast to the shaft. *That spear had never been sent into a fish!* Nor did he mention the fact that the lanyard had been fastened with a wicked slip-knot to Peach's wrist—instead of the easily disengaged finger-loop.

"It's a strange thing," wondered Jones. "Perhaps there was magic about it—but it makes a wonderful picture!"

SO IT did, because David Jones was an artist; and when, developing his film, he suddenly saw that naked arm shoot out from the rocks below Peach and snatch hold of the lanyard—he cut that part of the film out.

"Because," he said to himself, "that would spoil everything. Indeed to goodness, he is dead—and this is a wonderful picture!"

INDIAN CONTEMPT

by **Frank H. Huston**

TROOPS on the plains always endeavored to give a fitting funeral to such soldiers as died or were killed while on a hike. But at times this was impossible and bodies were left to be scalped by the hostiles and finished by crows and wolves.

On several occasions trenches were filled with the bodies of the deceased and horses picketed thereon to disguise the place of concealment, a trick not always successful.

In the beginning, the Indians would not violate a grave, but seeing the whites molest every Indian grave they found, the warwhoops adopted the white man's customs in this respect, more to show their contempt for the whites than for any desire for "cold" scalps. The latter brought them little honor, and no entertainment, but their resentment was deep.

WHEN Spotted Tail, Red Cloud and other chiefs were in Washington in 1870, Congress was called upon to pass a bill for providing funds for their entertainment; one of the items being thirty dollars for candy.

While at the White House the delegation was served with ice-cream in cut glass bowls with gold spoons.

Red Cloud remarked to Grant that he was glad to see that his white brothers were not suffering from poverty and obliged to live on roots and corn mush and that it appeared the whites had many kinds of food which they did not send to the agents for distribution to the red men; adding as an afterthought—

"Perhaps the warm hearts of the Agents melt this sweet snow before it can be given to the Indians."

The TRAITOR

by Ernest Haycox

Author of "A Cup of Sugar," "Trial by Fire," etc.

THE trial had started at high noon. Now, as it drew to a close, the long winter shadows were sliding through the windows and the fire on the hearth gleamed more cheerfully. There had been many witnesses, all men of action who spoke blunt and unmistakable words of censure. The officer charged with the defense had interposed countless questions and thanked each one as he stepped from the stand. Yet it was quite evident the prisoner's case was desperate. The members of the court martial board, for all their studied impartiality, became more and more taciturn; the trial judge-advocate stared into the fire, and no amount of pains could conceal his honest opinion. Throughout the room was an air of grim, unfavoring hostility. Young Captain Forrester stood on his feet in the selfsame spot he had stood all the age-long afternoon; and, save for a heightening of color, not a line of his countenance had changed.

"The orderly will call Lieutenant McKee, the final witness," said the judge-advocate.

The door opened and another young officer—youth was a characteristic of this Continental army camped along the Delaware—dressed as neatly as well-worn clothes would permit, marched squarely up to the table. He allowed himself one swift inspection of the room and his eyes fell upon Captain Forrester. If there once had been a camaraderie between these two it was not now apparent; the lieutenant's visage mirrored only the contempt of one who carried honor very high. Doubtless he would, in years to come, soften his opinions with more of tolerance and sympathy; at present neither element was visible in the flashing black eyes that swept the prisoner, then turned in obedience to the superior officer behind the table.

"You swear to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

The lieutenant raised his arm.

"Yes, sir."

"You are the lieutenant in Captain Forrester's troop of dragoons?"

"I am, sir."

"You accompanied Captain Forrester on a scouting party he led across the river into enemy territory, one week ago today. You were in the engagement that took place with a party of British horse. Now tell this board the story of that encounter, in reference to the charge of cowardice against Captain Forrester. Be brief, sir."

"We crossed the river at three-thirty," began the lieutenant precisely, "and rode directly eastward. I noticed the captain appeared to be nervous that day but thought nothing of it until we reached the intersection of the Trenton and the River

"The Traitor," copyright 1926, by Ernest Haycox

roads. There we flushed a party of twenty British horse. With our superior force we commanded an advantage as the first rounds of fire clearly showed." His voice took on emotion. "You may imagine my surprize, sir, when I turned to find Captain Forrester pulling his mount behind the men with a most peculiar expression. I called for the men to stand ground. Then the captain favored me with a name I do not care to repeat before the honorable gentlemen and ordered the detachment to break and retreat into the woods, himself setting the example by disappearing as fast as his horse would go."

Utter silence fell upon the group. The judge-advocate pursed his lips and sighed dismally. The orderly standing by the door was openly contemptuous. Captain Forrester maintained his steady gaze through the window into the graying dusk.

"You are certain the captain had not sufficient reasons for ordering the retreat?"

"I am certain, sir. We outnumbered the enemy. Our men wished to fight. It is, moreover, the unanimous opinion of the troop that Captain Forrester displayed emotions unworthy an officer."

"You express a personal opinion, of course," interposed the officer of the defense.

"Yes, sir," replied the lieutenant spiritedly. "But an opinion well founded."

The officer of the defense appeared to abandon a task in which his heart had never been.

"If it please the honorable gentlemen, I have no more questions to ask and no further pleadings to make."

"That is all, sir."

The lieutenant swung on his heel, carefully avoided the prisoner's eyes, and left the room.

"Captain Forrester, do you care to make a statement?"

The prisoner seemed not to hear the judge-advocate's question. The officer of the defense made haste to answer—

"No, sir, he does not care to."

"Clear the room."

The orderly tapped Forrester on the arm and said "come" gruffly. They opened the door and stepped into a hall with the officer of the defense trailing behind. A half dozen or more soldiers were loitering in the hall, all witnesses waiting to be released by order of the board. As the prisoner paused, undecided as to where he should stand, each and every one of the group ceased speaking and in a common movement turned their backs to him. The prisoner's cheeks took an added color. He swung toward his defender, but that officer, too, had found it convenient to retire at a distance and engage in the inspection of an old print on the wall.

Thus the prisoner stood, isolated save for the watchful orderly who was responsible for his appearance in court. He fumbled in his pockets and for want of a better diversion went through the motion of hooking his fingers in his saber belt. It was an old habit, but on this occasion there was no saber belt around him and no saber by his side. That had been surrendered upon his arrest. For the first time in the long day the composure broke. He pivoted sharply on his heel and stared at the wall, the high-bred face wrinkling in sharp lines and the mild, wistful patience of the blue eyes giving way to a sudden burst of fierce rebellion. Truth to say, the man at that moment in no manner resembled one who would skulk behind ranks or openly flee the enemy's presence.

A summons reached them. The orderly plucked Captain Forrester on the arm and opened the door. The judge-advocate stood beside the table with a slip of paper in his fist.

"The gentlemen who were witnesses," said he, "will enter also and hear the verdict, that it may become known speedily through the entire army."

Captain Forrester halted in front of the table. Behind him the witnesses formed a small semicircle. The judge-advocate unfolded the slip of paper, glanced at it as if to read and then dropped it to the table, like a man abandoning ceremony for more vigorous means.

"The board has not found it necessary to deliberate long. The evidence submitted—not one word of which was refuted by defendant—is too strong to doubt. We, therefore, find Captain Allan Forrester guilty of that most reprehensible of offenses, cowardice, and do hereby order his immediate dismissal from the service of his country. There would have been severer punishment had it not been for the illustrious name carried by the prisoner. Captain Forrester, you will gather your personal possessions and leave this camp immediately, never

again to return under penalty of being drummed out."

THE words rolled solemnly through the room. The spectators, glancing curiously at the prisoner's profile, saw it settle heavily, as if hope and buoyancy had fled. He dropped his chin in acknowledgment of the sentence, turned deliberately and walked to the door. The lieutenant who had rendered such accusing evidence stood disdainfully aside, but the captain stopped.

"I should be willing," said he mildly, "to offer you satisfaction for the language I used."

"I can not accept your challenge," said the lieutenant, with an alacrity that indicated previous consideration of the subject. "The code does not permit an affair of honor between a gentleman and a—coward!"

"Ah, well," said the captain softly, and passed the door.

A dozen paces brought him out of the house and in the dusk he trudged by a long line of tents, picked his way from one quarter of the camp to another and arrived, finally, at a log hut, in front of which stood a magnificent black mare, saddled. The captain went inside and reappeared within a few minutes with saddle-bags and a blanket roll which he lashed to leather thongs. Taking the reins, he leaped to the saddle.

"Now, girl," he muttered, "get us out of here."

A head bobbed from an adjoining hut door, followed by several inquiring faces. The captain rode by with a wave of the hand and had for his answer a strong, resentful hoot. That sound carried him all the way through the streets of the Continental army and to the darkening road that dipped over a hill toward Bristol. He pulled the neck of his cloak tighter and made note of a farmhouse light twinkling cheerily across a meadow.

"Fortunate people!" he exclaimed. "May they never know the feelings of an outcast."

It was considerably after dark when he arrived in Bristol and rode slowly toward a massive white house on the edge of town. He got down from the horse and walked across the yard in the manner of one long accustomed to this very act. It appeared for a moment as if he meant to turn the knob and enter unannounced; after some reflection he raised the knocker and tapped twice. A shadow passed the side windows and he stepped back a pace when the portal opened and a tall frail man with cotton-white hair looked out, unsmiling.

"It's Allan, Father."

"Ah," said the old man and held his peace.

"I have come for a few clothes."

"Before you cross the threshold," said the old man deliberately, "I must know how the court martial judged you."

The captain sighed and swung half on his heel.

"Guilty."

"You do well to turn away!" cried the old man in a sudden burst of anger. "There is no bed or chair in this house for a Forrester lacking courage. I never wish to set eyes upon you again."

The door slammed. Somewhere within a feminine voice broke into a heart-rending wail. The captain ran back to his horse.

"There!" he cried forlornly, "is an end of home for me."

The black mare leaped down the dark street under the spur.

"Ah, well," he sighed, turning into a lane. The mount seemed to understand the destination as well as the rider, as it stopped without warning in front of a long, dormered mansion brooding peacefully behind a line of trees. The captain rested in the saddle, musing awhile. "I fear it will do neither of us justice. But that time must come—" He dropped to the ground and walked boldly to the door, knocking. There was a pause before a negress answered the summons.

"I wish to speak to Mistress Marilla."

The negress vanished, leaving the door ajar. The captain stepped back and inspected the house he had visited so many hundreds of times before. The porch, the yard, all were places he had known from early boyhood—

His attention returned swiftly to the door. A slip of a maid with rose-petal cheeks and prim lips stood revealed by the hall lamp. She held her head high and spoke with a sharp, swift decision.

"Allan, you must respect my feelings. Under the circumstances it is impossible for me to see you."

"I thought as much," said the captain.

"But would you not care to hear the verdict before dismissing me so summarily, my lady?"

"It is enough that you were arrested and charged. There must have been some truth in it or the suspicion would never have attached itself. My feelings! The whole town speaks of the disgraceful affair—and openly pities me."

"I came," said he, in the voice of one cutting himself from all hope and love, "to free you from your word. I have been adjudged a coward and not fit to serve the country."

"Oh!" A painful pause made a wider gulf between them. The girl's eyes were filled with an emotion wholly unfamiliar to the captain. "Under the circumstances," said she, faintly, "it would be such a relief. Some other girl, perhaps, would be better suited to your—to your temperament. Good night."

He did not linger on that porch. In the saddle again he aimed for the center of town, where the swinging shingle of a tavern creaked in the wind and a gush of light flooded through generous windows.

"Lord," sighed the young captain, "what a spartan community I was reared in!"

He whistled at the tavern door. A young boy dashed out and took the horse away while he, tossing the saddle-bags over a shoulder, strode into a low-beamed room. It was not crowded. A party of four sat indolently by one table and smoked their pipes; close by the hearth a booted and spurred individual supped in solitary state. The captain experienced a quick scrutiny from those of the party of four—all of whom he knew—and when he gave them a grave nod he had the courtesy of only one brief and hesitant reply. The tavern keeper bustled from the kitchen with a jovial greeting.

"Ah, Cap'n Allen, does the army do without you tonight?" Then with the sudden confusion of one who has made a slip of speech, he coughed. "——, no offense meant. No offense, I beg you! Will it be port or Madeira?"

"Port," said the captain, drawing off his gloves and staring at the booted and spurred stranger. "And one of your Jenny's omelettes, nicely done."

The tavern keeper cruised back into the kitchen and hissed to an elderly dame hovering over a stove.

"It's Cap'n Allen, lookin' black enough to run a man through."

"D'ye suppose they cut him from the army? Did ye ask?"

"Ask, woman? This be a tavern. I raise no quarrels ower a man's politick so long he pays his score. Fetch us an omelette, nicely turned. Ah, there's young Jed Gower starin' at the cap'n hostile-like. Jed's a firebrand. There'll be words, mark me."

"Firebrand!" sniffed the woman. "But cool enough to stay clear o' actual fire."

The captain toasted his hands by the hearth and conjured up pictures in the leaping flames. He was not an overly emotional man. Not a little of the matter-of-fact breeding of his forbears had been passed to him, had framed the chin which so belied the charge of cowardice. But he could not check the flights his outraged fancy took this night. The court martial had been a torturing thing. To the end of his days he should remember the scorn of the witnesses, the distaste of the judge-advocate and that ringing sentence— "dismissed from the service of your country—" He recoiled sharply from the memory of it and discovered his hands clenched together, stone-tight. The stranger eyed him with patent inquisitiveness. At the far corner, where the group of four made merry, he heard a voice he knew only too well speaking in mock seriousness—

"It is a question to me, what is an officer's place on a scouting party? Gentlemen, let us debate it. I say wisdom requires he hide behind ranks and run at first sight of a beef-eater."

Mine host waddled across the boards with the omelette and banged a bottle of wine on the table.

"It's only Jed Gower," he whispered. "A bit in his liquor. The tongue will be unbridled. But ye'll know Jed. Think nothin' o't."

The stranger appeared to divide his time equally between the conversation of the group and the effect it made on the captain's face. He poured himself a tumbler and raised it, shooting an incredibly sharp glance across the rim toward the young officer. The captain stared at the omelette like a man dreaming. The boisterous voices made a play of debating the question with a slyness that stung more bitterly than a whiplash—

"But as for honor and the country's cause," drawled Jed Gower, "I hold it—"

THE captain rose and kicked back his chair, cheeks flaming. The port glass dashed on the stone hearth, splintering in a hundred pieces. Jed Gower never finished his sentence; the parley stopped instantly. And the stranger missed no single detail of the scene.

"As for the country's cause," spoke the captain, seeming to have difficulty with his words, "I say, —— the country's cause! There are two sides to every question."

Jed Gower hoisted himself and flung out an accusing finger.

"That, my wooden soldier, is traitor's talk! If you ain't been, you should be drummed from the army."

"Make what you will of it," retorted the captain. "As for you, you never did have the gizzards to stand alone. Drink some more Dutch courage and hold to your friends' skirts."

"Courage!" scoffed Gower. "You're a great gentleman to use the word." He fell silent a moment, face screwing up vindictively. "Come," said he to the three others, "'tis no place for patriots. We need better air."

The stranger lowered his wine glass and watched the quartet pass through the door. He cast a careful glance back to the kitchen where mine host had diplomatically retired. Without preliminary overtures he abandoned his chair and came swiftly to the captain's table.

"You speak rashly, my friend. Discretion is the better part of politics."

"Discretion is not one of my virtues," replied the captain moodily.

"I judge, from things I could not help hearing, that you have left your recent employment," pointing to the captain's uniform.

"Court martial—cashiered—kicked out!"

"Ah!" The stranger's fist closed in a swift gesture. "Let me speak plainly. Are you seeking—ah, let us say, new employment?"

"It is impossible, you see, to remain here longer."

"You have a kind of courage we—I, I mean—could use." The stranger impaled the captain with another measuring glance. "Your sentiments, I trust, do not lead me astray. But our business would be highly profitable to us—me, I mean, and to you."

"I give you leave," said the captain, "to consider me an interested party. I believe I understand."

"It is not hard to see your position. The recent passage of words needs no explanation, it is quite convincing. Now, as between gentlemen—"

An unusual, muttering sound made its way down the street. The tavern keeper popped out of the kitchen with a warm, alarmed eye and went to the door. He drew his head back and wrung his hands.

"Oh, Lud! It's a'ready come to this! Gentlemen, gentlemen, you must go quickly! There's young Jed Gower headin' a sizable party this way. Trouble afoot for you, Cap'n Allen."

"We'll lose no time," said the stranger, pulling the captain by the shoulder.

Mine host closed and barred the door, groaning:

"And I've kept clear o' politick for so long a time. Whyn't they let a man make his livin' in peace? The back way, gentlemen. Through the kitchen. Oh, Lud, they'll wreck my place!"

Turmoil swelled and eddied in the narrow street; voices rang out angrily. The stranger plucked again at the captain's cloak.

"Come, man! We're not tarrying."

The latter seized his hat, threw a piece of silver at the tavern keeper and ducked into the kitchen.

"Hustle now! Oh, Lud!"

The door was struck resounding blows and a voice penetrated.

"Open up, pot-belly, or we'll hang you higher'n a kite flies!"

Captain Forrester scraped past a row of pots and pans and found himself in a dismal shed.

"There's apt to be a bit of trouble in the rear yard," whispered the stranger. "Follow closely."

Hinges creaked; a patch of stars was visible. The two ran across a piece of level ground, pursued by the mob's ever strengthening voice, swelling and rebounding between house walls. It seemed familiar territory to the stranger; more than once his arm brushed back to save the captain from the trap of a clothes-line or the box-work of a well. They skirted trees, skimmed across a road that bisected several dingy

houses and plunged downhill. A cowbell tinkled in near-by pastures; the stiff river breeze smote the captain's face and the lapping of water emerged from the darkness. The stranger moved with greater circumspection and in time stopped. A low whistle floated away, lost itself with the shadows and after a while was repeated.

"Come," he muttered, "don't be stargazing. Time presses."

The sound of the mob spread like wildfire. They had, somehow, caught scent and were pressing toward the river, voices calling to and fro, challenges given and answered, wild discoveries announced at every jump. The stranger grumbled and sent out his third signal.

"Aye," said a voice at their feet.

The captain started and was reassured by pressure from his guide's arm.

"High time," growled the latter. "We're bein' pressed. Will you climb in, Captain? Now row like the ——"

The oars cut the water with a gurgling echo. Forrester, sprawled in the sternsheets, felt the current take them rapidly downward. He glanced back at the shore and saw the lanterns spread outward like so many fireflies. Some one cried—

"They've slipped through! I hear oarlocks." Immediately a gun boomed and a bullet chugged in the stream. Others followed.

The stranger chuckled.

"You fools, save your bullets. Now, Captain, we will cross and rest in friendlier territory tonight. Tomorrow I shall take you to a certain officer. I think you will not find us ungrateful."

MAJOR-GENERAL GRANT, a man weighing three hundred pounds and possessing jowls as florid as a rooster's comb, drove his questions at the captain with a certain ruthless severity. For an hour the two had been closeted together at the British headquarters in Brunswick town, with the booted and spurred individual waiting outside the door. Suddenly the general snapped his huge jaws together.

"Your figures fit well with those I already have. I think you tell the truth."

The captain bowed, his cheeks showing color.

"I am not a liar."

The general raised a puffy hand in a gesture of conciliation.

"I have not said you were. But, under the peculiar circumstances—"

"You will grant every gentleman a certain amount of feeling," replied the captain. "I have my share of pride. It has been severely dealt with this last week. Perhaps that will explain my being here."

"Ah, yes," breathed the general, reaching for his snuff box. "It is a sufficient excuse."

But the captain dissented.

"I ask no excuse. I do not seek palliation for what I have done. I stand by my actions, sir, without begging any man's pardon!"

"That being so, let us consider another matter." The general tapped his pocket suggestively. "What do you require? Be light on the treasury."

"Money?" cried the captain. "I want none of your shillings."

"A commission, then?" asked the general dubiously. "I doubt if I can satisfy you on that point. You will understand our men would not care to serve under one so recently changed in politics."

"I value your officer's commission at less than a farthing," stated Captain Forrester contemptuously.

The wattles of the general empurpled.

"——, what do you want, then?"

"Please to understand, I ask no profit. If I can serve you, as an agent in any matter, or if there is other information you desire, I am at your service. Meanwhile, I should like the shelter of your flag. I can have no other home now. My name is proscribed across the Delaware. Should I be taken by the rebels—"

"You would be immediately hung," supplied the general curtly. "Very well, I give you leave to consider yourself a member of my unofficial family. Major Blauwens!"

The booted and spurred individual appeared in the doorway.

"Take this gentleman and find him quarters," directed the general. "He will be with us indefinitely."

Captain Forrester bowed himself out and followed the major down the darkening street. They passed an artillery park and a company of dragoons forming for patrol duty. The major turned in at a tavern and transferred his charge to the host. In a half hour the young captain was sleeping the sleep of a weary man.

It appeared, during the subsequent three days, that the captain had forsworn public appearance. He ate his meals by the tavern fireplace, isolated from the other officers who frequently came in to escape the cold winter air. Usually, during the twilight hours he took a short walk down the street as far as the headquarters, passing the artillery park and soldiers' barracks. But he evinced no interest in the life around him, nor seemed to notice the more or less constant company of a short, insignificant grenadier who dogged his steps while he was outside the tavern. For the rest of the day he stayed in his room, with a book of Plutarch in his hands. And yet, though he kept the volume open, he seldom read. His attention was always on the view he commanded from his bedroom window.

That view was a generous one, taking in the whole sweep of the street and overlooking the artillery park. It was only natural, perhaps, that a soldier—or one who had once been a soldier—should observe the details of military equipment which confronted him. He counted the guns in the artillery park and observed their caliber. He broke the monotony of his self-imposed confinement by inspecting the files of soldiery that hourly marched by his vantage point. He showed an interest in their numbers, in their officers, and took special pains to read the insignia of their regiments. He came to know, in a rough way, the composition of the command at this half-way post in the British line. His attention, too, was often directed at the headquarters door where the staff officers arrived and departed. And, also like a soldier, he compared the men he saw here with those other British units he had passed on the road from the river to this place. He thus made a mental picture of the countryside and the soldiers posted therein.

He had no visitors until the third day when a sharp rapping sounded on the panels of his door. Moving away from the window he dropped into a chair and raised the ever-present volume of Plutarch, then summoned the caller to enter. It was his guide, Major Blauwens.

"Come," said the major, "the general wishes to see you."

Forrester threw on his cloak and followed his guide down the stairs and into the street.

"Where," asked the major, "have you kept yourself? I have not seen you."

"It seemed politic for me not to walk abroad," replied the captain. "There's no telling who might be in this town. A patriot, you know, might conceive it his duty to enter in disguise and put a bullet through me."

The major broke into a resounding laugh.

"Nonsense! No rebel would so willingly expose himself to capture. You overrate your danger."

"You don't realize the depth of feeling my defection has caused amongst my former friends," said Forrester soberly.

They entered the headquarters building and confronted the general.

"The Colonel Rall, at Trenton, wishes information about the rebel regiments across the river," said the general. "I am sending you there, under escort, to tell him what he wants to know. You will doubtless give him more information than I could put in a letter. If, in addition, you will draw him a map of the roads opposite Trenton ferry, he will be greatly obliged. Major Blauwens, you will take six dragoons and accompany this gentleman."

"Six?" said Forrester, with emphasis. "General, do you think that a sufficient guard?"

"Tush," replied Grant. "You exaggerate your danger. The countryside is safe. You will stay overnight with Colonel Rall and return in the morning."

Captain Forrester retired and waited solemnly under the lee of the artillery park until his escort clattered up, leading an extra horse. He put himself in the saddle, forged beside the major and steadied his horse. They left the street and turned westward on the Trenton-Princeton road. The sun rose without warmth in the morning sky and a bitter wind swept the narrow valley.

With the town behind them they broke to a steady trot that never varied from one mile to another. Forrester bent his head to escape the fine particles of sand passing through the air. The major flung out a sentence—

"Invigoratin' weather to ride in, but the cinders I don't enjoy!"

Forrester nodded. After three days' confinement he felt greatly cheered to have a good horse beneath him; he wondered what fate had befallen his own black mare, so summarily deserted at the Bristol tavern. His father, doubtless, had taken

it. The thought of his father turned him to sober self-communion. He lost all trace of the road and knew nothing of their whereabouts until the major sang out, and they drew rein before a dingy appearing inn in the village of Cranberry, half the distance to Trenton. It was a breathing spell in which the dragoons munched at salt-horse and biscuit while the major went inside to refresh himself. Forrester stood by his horse and waited until that officer came out.

They mounted and again took the highway. The sun dipped downward.

The road suddenly left the open part of the valley and began to dodge through stands of oak and hickory. They passed a coach rolling heavily and accompanied by two civilians on horse. The major saluted and pressed on. They skirted a farmhouse and rode through a vagrant band of tame geese, sending the feathers flying. One of the dragoons raised in his stirrups and looked back with a regretful toss of his head.

"They'd make fine pie," said he.

They entered a heavier stand of hardwood trees with overhanging branches. The road made a tunnel, dark and windy. The hoofs echoed sharply. Major Blauwens leaned over and announced:

"We'll reach Trenton before five. I hope the Hessian Rall keeps a good officers' mess."

FORRESTER'S attention was suddenly diverted. A small flock of sheep came out of the thicket, a hundred yards in advance of the squad, and took to the road. Behind them marched a stooped man covered in a farmer's smock. He carried a switch in one hand and upon hearing the dragoons thundering over the road he turned and waved it in warning. The major checked his horse and brought the squad to a walk. The sheep milled around in confusion.

"Draw your animals aside," said the major, "and let us pass."

The farmer came beside Forrester's horse and looked up with a swift gleam of interest; the young captain's face turned stony and he sat rigid. The farmer shook his head.

"They be stubborn brutes," he vouchsafed, reaching under his smock for something.

"Get them off," insisted the major, "or we'll ride through. King's business."

Forrester felt the rustic's hand tightly clutch his reins.

"King's business ain't profitable business this time," said the man and whipped a pistol to Forrester's head.

At that signal the underbrush rattled and moved; a score of figures in American uniform sprang to sight with rifles raised. The major cried, "Ambush!" and wheeled his horse. A volley of shots roared in the glade and a dragoon fell from his saddle with a short, desperate groan. In a moment the road was alive with struggling, bawling men. The major fired point-blank at the nearest assailant and shouted—

"Charge 'em, Fourteenth!" A gun belched smoke and flame in Forrester's face. The powder choked his breath. His horse reared high and came down trembling. Then his arm was caught in a vise-like grip and he was dragged from the saddle, beneath the trampling feet of the ambushers.

"Make a move and I'll bash yer head!" muttered the pseudo farmer.

It was a short and decisive engagement. The dragoons swung their sabers and vainly tried to ride free of the mêlée. One by one they were brought down, some dead, some captive. Forrester, kicked and indiscriminately pounded by his captor, heard the resistance die out and the guns cease their execution. An impatient voice issued an order.

"Bring up the horses. Tie these beefeaters and put 'em in their saddles. Hurry! We've got to leg it out of these parts and cross the river before a patrol catches up. Halloa, what's this?"

The voice advanced upon Forrester. The pseudo farmer rose and doffed his smock.

"L'tenant, we got a prize we wasn't expectin'. It's Cap'n Forrester. I saw him first off and pulled him down out of bullet's reach. Wanted to ketch him alive. The dog's turned traitor!"

Forrester, turning, saw the amazed face of his former lieutenant, McKee, staring at him. Others crowded in and one by one he distinguished the members of his old command. Once more they had invaded hostile territory. After a long interval he heard McKee's ironic, scornful salutation.

"My respects, Mister Forrester. I hardly expected to find you so close to gunfire. And now I shall have the pleasure of carting you back to our lines, and of seeing you hung!"

THE swift turning of events made the ill-starred captain submissive. He had no answer to the jeers and maledictions they heaped upon him. Throughout the journey back over the Delaware and across the dark country to Washington's main camp, he preserved a humble silence, and when they led him to the guard-house and consigned him with an only too apparent relish to his inevitable fate, he turned his back that they could not see his countenance. In the shadows of that cell he might commune with his own conscience.

But he was not to be let alone. The door opened again within the half hour and he was led out to face a file of armed men with a squad of drummers at their head. The officer of the guard spoke.

"Take your place, sir. The commander-in-chief wishes to see you; and may God pity your black heart for what he says to condemn such perfidious conduct."

Forrester took his place. The ranks closed and they started across the parade ground, the drums crashing out the one tune men of honor hope never to hear played in their behalf—the Rogue's March. All across that open field the sound rolled. Figures ran up and, by the aid of the lanterns held before the captain's face, beheld the object of the humiliating display. But he would look neither to left nor right; his chin was strongly set and the color flushed his cheeks.

The detail stopped before a farmhouse and the ranks opened. The officer of the guard pointed mutely to the open door, wherein stood a sentry. Forrester walked over the threshold. The leaping of a bright fire first met his gaze, then he halted in the presence of a robust man with a ruddy, strong face and eyes that suddenly kindled. The splendid figure seemed to expand and fill with energy. A deep, level voice commanded the sentry—

"Close the door." Thereupon the general and the traitor were left alone.

The blinds of the house were drawn and the shutters closed; sentries stood around the walls to fend away curious souls. No man knew, therefore, what passed between these two while they were closeted in that room for the better part of a half hour. But all the army would have been interested and astonished at the final words between them.

"You have been fortunate in making such an early contact," said the general. "And the information you bring is valuable. Now you must return. It is necessary that I know which way they move their troops these coming five days. You must find your own resources for sending me what you learn. You are sure no suspicion attaches to you?"

"I am certain, sir. The ambush was too sudden, too unexpected to lead General Grant to suspect treachery. I was fortunate, too, in meeting the major. He heard my own townspeople come to lynch me. As for any one on this side of the river suspecting my true identity, the court martial—"

"Yes," said the general, "you played a disagreeable part well. And now let me abjure you never to lose the high courage you have shown thus far. Your life, your value as a secret agent is balanced on the slightest move of your tongue. You can have no friends, no ties, no single soul to comfort you throughout the period you serve me. You will be execrated in the memory of your former comrades; the British will suffer you only because they think you useful. In their hearts they will despise you. Every American rifle will hunt you and every tongue will scorn your name. Yet, Captain Forrester, you must go on with these missions I give you."

The young captain stood as straight as a staff, the color mounting his cheeks.

"I do not mind the hazards, sir. For me the hard part has passed. My father will not own me and the girl I was to marry will never again mention my name. I ask the general but one favor."

"What, sir?"

"That if I am killed you will publish my true character in the gazettes of this county that my people will know I have not been disloyal."

"I promise you that," said Washington. He put a hand on Forrester's shoulder. "My esteem shall always be with you."

YOUNG Captain Forrester stepped from the headquarters house with his shoulders back and presented a serene face to the contemptuous crowd.

And some time during the night a mysterious aid helped him break through the guard house and vanish toward the dark waters of the Delaware.

CONGO SUN

A Complete Novelette

by

Ralph R. Perry

Author of "Bilge Salvage," "What Makes a Sailorman," etc.

CHAPTER I

THE FORECASTLE SPEAKS ITS PIECE

FROM the direction of the wine shops of Ponta del Garda arose a confused babble of shouted, maudlin argument and snatches of ribald song. The noise approached the water-front; then, out of the darkness, a big seaman lurched into the light at the shoreward end of the quay. Five vociferous shipmates stumbled along behind him. Directly under the light the first man turned and roared out a demand for a last drink. The group obediently halted. One of them produced a bottle, which the big man snatched and tilted to his lips. The light gleamed upon the glass while he drank, and flashed when he hurled it to the deck of the pier with a tinkling crash. The five yelled angry protest, to be stilled by a snarled and defiant curse, and the six men who formed the deck force of the steamer *Durban* resumed their uncertain walk to their ship.

From the obscurity at the head of the *Durban's* gangway the red tip of a cigaret gleamed, and Tom Cole, chief mate, tightened his belt a notch and stepped forward to receive his crew. He had taken the gangway watch because he had expected trouble, and now that trouble was assuredly staggering up the quay Cole was glad he was there to deal with it himself. The other mates, or even Captain Gatlin, might bungle the task.

Hooker, the third mate, was too slow of movement and wits to handle a drunken gang; Shaunessey, the second, would be too free with his fists, for the freckle-faced Irishman was not one to overlook an insult because the sailor who mouthed it was drunk; and as for Captain Gatlin—about him Cole was still unable to make up his mind. They had both joined the ship only eight days before, but in that short time, a remark made the day they sailed, and the impression received from a week's contact at sea, made the first mate hope that for the next half hour the skipper would remain asleep in his cabin.

"She's my first big ship—a grand big ship, ain't she, Mister?" Gatlin had said. Words and tone alike were a confession of weakness, for the *Durban* grossed only seven thousand tons, which is not a big ship, but a small one. She was carrying a general cargo to half a dozen ports on the way to Matadi, at the mouth of the Congo, where she would pick up a cargo of lumber for Hamburg. That promised to be a hard, hot, disagreeable voyage which Cole would never have undertaken if the shipping slump hadn't thrown him out of a job so many months before that he was

compelled to go to sea on whatever offered.

Moreover, to judge by his white mustache and his weazened face, with its nose hooking down to meet the chin, Gatlin must be over sixty. His first big ship! What had the man commanded previously? Coastwise steamers, Cole discovered, little two and three thousand-ton boats about the Gulf of Mexico and the West Indies. Not the man Cole wanted on deck when a tough crew returned aboard.

He stepped forward, for with a whoop and a yell fit to wake the dead the big seaman rushed up the gangway. His five shipmates tried to follow, but they jammed hopelessly in the narrow footway and stuck there, shouting and wrestling, all five trying to crowd up a two-foot passage at once.

"Pipe down—that'll be all, Sutson," said Cole authoritatively.

His forward step had taken him to the head of the gangway, which sloped so steeply that the mate stood head and shoulders above the big sailor. Sutson could not pass. He stopped, holding on to the rails with both hands to steady himself, and glared up at the mate through bloodshot eyes. Cole was of middle height, but uncommonly broad of shoulder and long of arm. His cap was off, and the faint light from the quay disclosed straight black hair, high cheek bones, and a thin white scar running from the corner of the eye back toward his left ear. The scar gave a sinister cast to a face naturally stern and determined, but the big seaman was not awed in the least.

"Aw-w — who the —— says so?" he growled.

Cole wasted no more breath. Knowing precisely what he meant to do, his right hand darted out and snatched a bottle from the seaman's pocket before the numbed faculties of the other could grasp what was happening. The bottle was smashed on the rail, the splintered neck tossed over the side, and the mate was back in his position while Sutson was opening his mouth for the bellow of protest that would give him nerve enough to rush.

"You slut-faced dock rat! You four-flushin' Mohun sodger, you," swore Cole instantly. Not very loudly; but speaking between his teeth, and clearly enough for every word to carry to the other seamen still bunched at the foot of the gangway. "Who's talkin' to you?"

The mate thrust his chin forward and glared into the other's eyes.

"Me! See me? Tom Cole's talking—Mister Tom Cole—that likes 'em tough, you mule-faced false alarm. Come aboard now—and lemme hear you open your trap!"

Sutson scowled. He was not intimidated, and he was accustomed to hard language. Yet Cole's denunciation had been so swift and blasphemous that he was humiliated. Such a bawling-out called for a retort equally violent. The big seaman was not drunk enough to dare to take a punch at the mate's head, and only by a more profane, more sulphurous retort to the mate's personalities could he recover his prestige in the forecastle. Vaguely his fuddled wits groped for blasphemies, and could produce nothing but a surly, "Aw ——," which he growled out while he was obeying the mate's command.

The instant their leader had passed and was slouching sullenly toward the crew's quarters, Cole turned to the other seamen.

"Come up here, you —— mistakes!" he commanded. "One at a time—so. Think you can bring booze aboard this wagon, hey?" Two more bottles went spinning over the side. "Know different now, don't ye? Get along there— Huh! Got anything to say, you big Heinie?"

Cole had turned at a growl of anger and walked truculently up to a huge blond seaman whose brutish face was flushed with liquor.

"What was that you said—speak your piece!" the mate challenged.

"Nothin'," said Fruhauf, with a weakness that would have been comical had less than the discipline of the ship been at stake.

"Better had be nothin'," Cole mimicked. "Git below—and keep quiet."

One by one the men stepped by the first mate, keeping their eyes on their shoes, and went slouching up the dark decks after Sutson and Fruhauf. They went in silence, their feet pounding heavily and unsteadily on the deck. There would not be a word spoken until they reached the shelter of the forecastle. Then they would all talk at once. Threaten, boast of what they would say next time, of what they had just been going to say tonight—Cole could imagine it

all, and he grinned to himself, shrugged, and lighted a cigaret.

Might just as well call the second mate and get some sleep, he reflected. He had known there would be trouble when the crew had their first shore leave. With a seamen's strike on in New York, the *Durban* had had to take any dock rats she could get. The boatswain was the only sailor forward. He'd be ashore still, paralyzed in some gutter, likely; but neither from him nor from the oilers still on the beach would any trouble come. Now that the crew had been properly bawled out things would run smoother.

Cole yawned and stretched, for he considered that he had done an important job well and gotten a whip-hand over the crew which would last for the entire voyage. He was sauntering forward to call the second mate when an unexpected hubbub on the forward well stopped him short. Sutson, by some ill luck, had met another officer on his way below, to whom he was now shouting out all the retorts Cole had given him no time to utter on their clash at the gangway. The job on which the first mate had been preening himself had all to be done over again. Once more Sutson was out of hand.

"Lemme tell you I got my rights, I have," the big seaman was bellowing. His voice was hoarse from liquor; he insisted upon his rights with the crapulous stubbornness of an intoxicated man. "I know the Seaman's Act, I do. Ain't no nigger-driving brass-bound ape of a first officer can make me lick his boots." He paused for breath.

Cole, hastening forward, strained his ears for the officer's reply. Now was the time—for this defiance of Sutson's was bluster. He was talking of his rights, which meant that he was on the defensive, and he had stopped because he did not quite dare to proceed to open insubordination.

But the officer made no reply.

"I'll have my advance and my liberty on the beach in every port, I will!" Sutson maintained at the top of his lungs. He was emboldened by the other's silence to push an unexpected superiority to its limit. "Every port, won't we, shipmates?" he appealed, and their maudlin chorus of assent, unrebuked, nerved Sutson to shout, "For I'm as good a man as you are any day, Captain Gatlin, an' I'll go ashore and git drunk in every port like the law sez I can."

COLE had reached the break of the forward well-deck, and at this defiance he pulled his whistle from his pocket and set it between his lips to call assistance if need be, and crouched in the shadow of the bridge overhead. He was near enough to jump down the ladder and be at the skipper's elbow in five seconds, but he did not want to go to the captain's assistance if it could be avoided. For him to plunge into the group might precipitate a fight, and nowadays at sea hard-boiled stuff profits no one. Owners and port captains will not back up their officers; consuls and juries give the poor, downtrodden seamen the benefit of the doubt—and it is hard to work a ship with half the crew in handcuffs and the rest bruised and rebellious. Yet Sutson was getting out of hand. Unless the captain acted quickly he would have to knock the man down.

"You're drunk," said Gatlin.

"You're —— right I'm drunk," Sutson howled. "An' what's more, I got a right to be drunk, an' I'm goin' to be drunk every time we're in port. I'm as good a man as you and 'cordin' to law you got to lemme 'shore with advance wages 'n every port. Whadya think I'm goin' do? Hey? Ain't I's good's you?"

Before Gatlin could answer Cole had jumped down the ladder and across the deck. Sutson, with his five shipmates compactly bunched behind him, had been moving slowly forward until Gatlin had been crowded back against the wall of the forecastle. The big seaman now stood with his feet wide apart and his hands on his hips, rocking a little with the effort to keep erect, yet with his elbows and shoulders thrust truculently forward as he awaited the skipper's reply. Gatlin was in shirt sleeves and slippers, without even a hat for a badge of authority.

He was by far the oldest and smallest man on deck. The top of his head, noticeable even in the dim light because of the whiteness of his hair, did not come to Sutson's shoulder. He had let the men get too close, and talk too long; and when Cole shouldered through the group and thrust the men apart they growled imprecations behind his back. Still they were scattered, and even Sutson fell back a pace when Cole reached the captain and turned belligerently toward the crew.

The mate had made up his mind the insubordination would soon lead to blows. He would swing for Sutson's wind with his right; then try for Fruhauf's jaw. If he could put them out in two clean punches the others would be overawed. Both seamen were tipsy, but they were bigger than he. Cole rather doubted whether he could score a double knockout, and if a free-for-all fight once started, with the other officers asleep or off the ship—

He glanced aside at the captain. Gatlin's weazened face looked frightened. He was trying to chew his short white mustache, which was clipped too close for his teeth to touch it, and his eyes, avoiding Sutson's, roamed over the ring of seamen behind as if he were seeking a gap in their ranks.

"Well, ain't we as goods you?" Sutson demanded.

"Tell him where he gets off, Captain," Cole prompted under his breath.

The skipper drew a long breath—then shook his head.

"Yes, you're as good as anybody. Now go below," he soothed.

"Yah! Hear that!" exulted the seaman. "Law says an advance and liberty in every port, don't it?" he demanded.

"That's the law," agreed the skipper miserably.

" 'N' no one'll makes us do different," shouted Sutson. "Hey?"

"No one's going to try," Gatlin conceded. "Now go below."

"Sure, go below!" Sutson yelled. "Hear that, you yahoos? Cap'n says go below. Come on."

He uttered a second yell of triumph and turned away, driving his shipmates before him. At the door of the seaman's quarters he stopped and looked back.

" 'N' no brass-bound son of a sea-cook tells me different," he announced, looking squarely at Cole.

"Meaning?" said the first mate softly, stepping on tiptoe, with his arms swinging.

Sutson scowled and stood his ground. As the mate started toward him, instead of raising his fists his right hand crept up to the back of his neck, the fingers sliding along inside the collar of his shirt.

"Stop that, Mister!" commanded Gatlin, and with the order he caught Cole firmly by the arm.

"Let him come," growled Sutson. "Know my rights—ain't no bucko can bluff me."

But before Cole could pull himself out of the captain's clutches the big sailor was hauled out of sight by some one in the passage behind him.

"Lemme go!" Cole heard him shout; but then he must have decided discretion was the better part of valor. "I told him where to get off, hey?" he crowed. "Didja hear me speak my piece?" His voice died into a hoarse rumble as his shipmates pulled him into the living quarters on the deck below.

At Cole's side the skipper gave a whistle of relief.

"Thought sure we were going to have trouble," he chattered. "I don't want reports of punishments to go to the owners on my first big command." Cole was silent, but the old man must have felt his disapproval. "You know yourself it don't do no good to knock a sailor down," he argued. "And I gotta give them liberty under the law."

"Yeah, you got to give 'em liberty." Cole made no attempt to conceal his disgust. "But shore leave won't be a gift, now, to that parcel o' Nellie Blys! Why in blazes didn't you declare yourself and put that South Street baboon in his place?"

"I didn't want any trouble," pleaded Gatlin.

"Well, you'll get it now," the mate prophesied. "The forecastle thinks it's the boss, and what we'll have fore and aft won't just be trouble. It'll be fiery —— without a chaser."

CHAPTER II

THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING

THE next morning Cole called the crew at five o'clock, though it was not customary on the *Durban* to start work until six when in port. He went forward with a blackjack in his hip pocket, prepared for anything. They were a little slow coming on deck, but they turned-to meek as lambs. The first mate tramped up and down the forecastle-head for twenty-five minutes, and he had nearly made up his mind to go in after the loiterers when Sutson appeared, yawning. They began to wash down as usual—more slowly—but Cole never expected to get much work out of men just back from shore.

He tramped the decks with a chip on his shoulder, he bawled out the crew individually; beginning with Sutson, and ending

with little, inoffensive, half-witted Harrison. He flattered himself he was reestablishing discipline until after breakfast, when Sutson, whom he had been hazing unmercifully, straightened up in response to a sarcastic demand to "heave on that handy billy like a man instead of a yellow mongrel pup"—and grinned at the mate. Thereupon the big seaman pulled with even less force than before. Fruhauf hid a grin, Harrison guffawed, and the first mate understood that discipline had gone to the dogs.

They would carry out his orders—at their own pace, and in their own way. The slipshod way the lines came in when the *Durban* unmoored from the quay was enough to drive a mate speechless. Cole was hoarse from yelling before he realized the men were laughing at him. Then he began to kid them along, and accomplished more; but on her course from Punta del Guarda to Teneriffe in the Madeiras, the lookouts might have been blind—and usually were asleep. The men at the wheel would let the ship yaw half a point off course for the fun of hearing a mate splutter.

The men knew none of the mates would dare hit them except in self-defense. They could not be logged pay except with the captain's consent, and Gatlin had shown himself to be afraid of them. As if he had not proved it clearly enough already, he avoided the crew when he moved about the ship, and kept to his room most of the time. The disaffection of the forecastle spread through the ship like a disease. Within forty-eight hours an oiler let a shaft bearing get hot, and then was impudent to the second engineer. The latter's name was McCarthy. He started for the oiler with a fourteen-inch spanner, and chased him clear to the deck. In the race up the ladder McCarthy cooled down enough to toss the spanner aside and take the man to Gatlin, demanding, by all that was holy, that he be fined a week's pay. Naturally the oiler denied he had said the words McCarthy quoted, and Gatlin, with his weazened face frowning until it was full of wrinkles as a walnut, decided the second engineer had probably misunderstood—

The black gang were seamen, whereas the deck crew were dock rats signed on after the big strike, when captains would accept any men they could get. Work enough was done below decks to keep the *Durban* from falling below her standard speed, but there, too, discipline was at an end. By the fourth day the mates gave up. Shaunessey and Hooker let the men do as they pleased. Cole gritted his teeth and joshed them into doing a minimum of work, but the day before the ship arrived at Teneriffe he walked into the captain's room and flung himself on the bed before Gatlin had time to invite him to sit down. The skipper's brown face worked and his clipped white mustache bristled at the calculated discourtesy, but he said nothing.

"I can't stand this much longer," the first mate explained. "What do you expect to do with this crew?"

Gatlin shrugged.

"You won't declare yourself," Cole persisted angrily. "You won't let me settle with them. Bring one up to be logged and you tell him he's a bad boy—run away now and be good. They're out of hand, Captain, and it's going to be impossible for us to take aboard lumber at Matadi unless we get stevedores to handle the winches. This crew won't work in port, and we need a crew that will—an' jump to it."

"Have they refused duty?" Gatlin asked.

"Not yet. But they will. They're getting up more nerve every day."

Cole got off the bed and crossed to the settee, where he settled himself for a long discussion.

"Most any day, Captain, that crew's liable to get out of hand."

Cole thought to himself they were as insubordinate as men could be without starting a mutiny, but, since he was the chief officer, he did not like to admit it.

"Now, it never should have been allowed to start."

Gatlin frowned and opened his mouth. Cole paused, hopefully, for he wanted an excuse to tell the skipper just what he thought of his pusillanimity on the forward deck, but Gatlin shut his mouth and went on frowning.

"Since it has started," argued the first officer, "let's pay the men off at Teneriffe and sign on a new crew. That's the best thing that can be done now. Rough stuff won't work."

"Oh, you admit that, do you?" cried the captain. "That's just what I say, Mr. Cole! I'd have had to knock Sutson down and put him in irons. There was bound to be an investigation, trouble, dissatisfaction. The port captain would want to

know what the fight was all about—and I don't want any blot on my record on my first voyage with this big ship."

"Ain't you never learned the beauties of profanity?" asked Cole. "Better to fine one man than have to discharge six. But you're right; we can't use rough stuff now. It's too late, and it 'ud have to be too rough. Don't you think we better get rid of them?"

"It looks bad; a whole crew at once, that way," Gatlin hesitated.

"Yup. It is bad. Come on deck more and you'd see how bad," retorted Cole.

"The consul would have to look after them and he'd know they'd just get drunk and loaf on his hands. He'd never stand for it," Gatlin objected.

The twist of his lips beneath the white mustache, a jerk of his nutcracker jaw, indicated that he had heard and resented Cole's thinly veiled slur. Yet he did not refer to it directly.

"No," he decided, "I won't do anything that will make it even seem we are having trouble with the crew. We will only be in port a day. We'll keep them aboard ship; they'll be all right as long as they are sober."

"You think you'll keep them aboard?" Cole inquired derisively.

"Certainly I will," said the skipper, but his eyes flickered before the mate's level stare.

THE first mate chuckled outright over the positiveness of that assertion on the next day. The *Durban* had not dropped anchor twenty minutes before the entire crew came aft and demanded shore leave. Gatlin met them at the head of the bridge and pointed out it was only four in the afternoon. There was the rest of the day's work to be done aboard ship. The men grumbled, argued among themselves a little, and then Sutson stepped forward.

"We'll work our eight hours out," he growled. "Then we want an advance of wages, and leave. We're entitled to that in every port, see?"

Gatlin shrugged without making any reply, and when the crew turned-to, Cole began to have hopes that the skipper would make his boast good. Certainly he had won the first trick. The crew knocked off work promptly at six—appointed an anchor watch among themselves, selecting Harrison, as usual—then changed to shore-going clothes and demanded to see Gatlin. The skipper had locked himself in his room, and informed them through the door, that they could go ashore if they pleased, but they would receive no advance. Shore leave without money is a dull pastime.

"You double-crossin' rat," Sutson shouted, and began kicking on the door with all his strength.

Gatlin stood the racket for five minutes; then, since his door was on the point of being kicked off its hinges, he unlocked it to save his face. The men poured into the cabin. Gatlin tried to argue even then, but Sutson and the rest yelled him down, and to get rid of them he paid an advance. It was only three dollars a man, but in American money that sum will buy quarts of wine in the Madeiras.

"We rate half the wages what's due us. It's more than this," Sutson objected, staring at three coins in the palm of his dirty hand. "Come through, Cap'n."

The harassed little skipper flushed and his mustache bristled.

"Keep a civil tongue in your head," he retorted.

Sutson grinned sourly. His hand remained extended for the additional pay, and for a moment Gatlin debated the matter with himself, fumbling awhile with the heap of silver dollars on his desk. At last he picked up a fourth dollar and tossed it into the expectant palm.

"That's absolutely all you'll get," he blustered, and the big seaman, who had not expected so much, grinned insultingly and strolled out of the door, leaving Gatlin surrounded by a jostling crowd of seamen and firemen who thrust hands at him from every side, all demanding their pay at once.

Cole waited until the last of the gang had gone trotting and yelling up the quay trying to overtake his companions before they reached the nearest wine shop. Then the mate walked into the cabin. He found Gatlin slumped in his chair, his cap off and his white hair wild. An unlighted cigar slanted downward from the skipper's loose lips, but Gatlin was too crushed and dispirited to light it. He looked up wearily when the mate entered and pulled himself half erect in his chair.

"I been going to sea man and boy for thirty-eight years an' I never seen such a crew as them," he railed. "They don't have no more respect for their captain than—"

"Oh—have you been having trouble?" Cole inquired, sweetly.

"Couldn't you hear them Nelly Blys kickin' the door down? Where was you?" demanded the skipper furiously.

"For'ard, gettin' ready to discharge cargo," said Cole indifferently. "It's no use trying to bluff me, Mr. Gatlin. I knew what was goin' to happen." The mate folded his long arms across his chest and stared down at his worried little superior officer with a sardonic and half contemptuous smile. "I told you about this, yesterday. I can tell you what that parcel o' gangsters are doin' now—getting pie-eyed. By dark they'll be raising Cain; before night, likely, half of them'll be in the hoosegow. Tomorrow, if you go to the consul to pay them off, he wouldn't touch 'em with a ten-foot pole. That's right, ain't it?"

"Oh, I suppose so," said Gatlin irritably.

"But we ain't altogether beat yet," the mate went on earnestly. "I'm tryin' to do my duty, Captain, and if we go on bein' a doormat we won't get nothin' by it but more trouble. It'll be harder now than it was in Punta del Guarda, but I'll guarantee to show you a disciplined crew tomorrow—what there is of it."

"What do you intend to do—I won't have any rough stuff," cried the skipper.

Cole shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm going to stand gangway watch alone," he said. "I won't be armed, either, Mr. Gatlin. But I expect Sutson'll bring back a bottle, and you know what that will do to discipline. First a crew talks bold and brash, next it brings booze aboard ship, then it refuses duty. That's the way a crew goes to the devil. You know that, sir. Now, they aren't agoin' to take the second step. I don't believe in startin' trouble, sir; but by ——, I don't believe in duckin' it, either. I'm tellin' you so you'll keep out of the way. Go ashore and stay all night if you want to keep clear with the owners."

"No, I wouldn't do that," said Gatlin slowly; and so positively that all at once Cole felt a stir of respect for the weazened little man. Gatlin was timid when confronted with the threat of physical violence, but he had at least enough moral courage to scorn passing the buck.

"It'll be all right, sir!" said the mate with a heartiness he was far from sharing. "Just keep in your cabin and it'll be all right; the owners'll never know."

Six hours later, a half hour after midnight, Cole again rose from behind the rail where he had been concealed by the darkness and stepped into view at the head of the gangway. Sutson, half-way up, paused, and when his bloodshot eyes recognized the first mate he laughed.

"Hello, Sour Face!" he gibed. "Have a drink?"

A bottle appeared from under his shirt, was waved in the air, and restored to its place. The big seaman grinned, and the first mate realized he was not half so drunk as he had been on the previous occasion. Like Cole himself, Sutson had suspected a clash was coming; and had taken only enough booze to make him ugly.

"Toss that bottle over the side," Cole commanded.

"You can go to ——," the seaman replied with equal determination, and started warily up the gangway.

Some one came down the deck and stopped about five feet behind the mate, but Sutson's eyes never shifted, and Cole himself did not dare to look around to see who had come to help him. He hoped it was Shaunessey or McCarthy. He could handle Sutson, he believed, but the five seamen were also moving purposefully up the gangway after their leader. It began to look as if he would have six men to fight.

"Better hand over that bottle," he gritted.

Sutson stopped. He had advanced within an arm's length of the mate, and now his right hand stole slowly inside the collar of his shirt.

"All right," he agreed slowly.

Holding the quart bottle by the neck, like a club, he pulled it into sight and half extended it. Cole reached out—and quick as a striking snake, the seaman swung the bottle in a backhanded blow directly at the mate's face. The flash of the sailor's eyes when he started the treacherous blow gave Cole warning enough to duck and block with his left arm, but the bottle struck him in the shoulder so heavily his arm went dead to the wrist, and, glancing upward, splintered into fragments against the iron stanchion to the left of the gangway. Sutson sprang backward, holding the jagged neck of the bottle ready to stab.

"Get out o' my way," he panted.

Cole whipped off his coat and raised it in both hands to entangle Sutson's weapon.

He intended to throw himself on to the man, rushing him down the gangway to the level ground where the fight could be settled fist and skull, but before he could move two hands seized his left arm.

"Don't hit him," shouted Gatlin's voice at his shoulder. "Stop, Mr. Cole, stop!" The mate was dragged to one side and the skipper stepped in front of him. "Drop it, Sutson," the captain cried nervously.

Sullenly the seaman lowered his weapon.

"Git out o' my way," he growled. "I'm comin' aboard."

The captain stood aside while the sailor shouldered by him, but when the rest of the crew sought to follow the little man blocked their path.

"The rest of you toss your bottles overboard," he ordered.

The file of men coming up the gangway never paused or hesitated. Fruhauf, who was at the head, put a big hand against the skipper's chest and shoved him staggering against the ship's rail, and all walked past while Gatlin clung to the arm of the raging first mate.

"Don't—don't," he kept panting. "Don't use force, Mr. Cole!"

"Ain't I as good as a ——ed sailor?" swore the mate.

By that time they were gone; a whoop of derision and the smash of glass as the neck of a bottle, knocked off on the rail of the ship for the first drink, sounded from the direction of the forecastle.

"It would mean mutiny if you struck him," gasped the skipper.

He released the mate's arm and stepped back, wiping a smear of blood from his wrinkled, sunken cheeks where a splinter of glass from Sutson's bottle had cut the skin.

"And what do you call it now?" demanded Cole; but the skipper, with a mournful shake of his head, had turned away.

The next morning Gatlin went to the consul seeking to pay off his crew, but that official, as Cole had prophesied, only laughed; and the *Durban* set sail under the hot sun for the mouth of the Congo. Mates and men moved sullenly about the decks. There was no talking; the necessary orders to con the ship were given grimly, and obeyed with a growl. Both sides were defiant, both a little frightened; and not the less dangerous on that account.

CHAPTER III

THE PIPER IS PAID

FROM Teneriffe the *Durban* headed southward and skirted the coast of Africa for fifteen days. The voyage, which was about three thousand miles of calm sea and an unvaried, brilliant, searching sunlight that confined all hands to the shade of the awnings during the middle of the day, was broken by short stops at Freetown and Lagos. At neither port did any decisive event occur; indeed, after the second clash at Teneriffe the relative status of officers and crew aboard ship was established and tacitly recognized. An insubordinate forecastle became the normal state of affairs.

At sea even Tom Cole put his orders in the form of requests, but for their part the men would set about the execution of his commands without delay, if without haste. Cole had been humbled and was biding his time; but he had not been tamed, and the men knew it. To the other mates they paid little attention, and Captain Gatlin received none at all. Shaunessey and Hooker gave orders, but the disaffection of the crew had sapped their spirit and they made no effort to see that they were obeyed. If the men did not feel like working, nothing was done until Cole came on watch. Since most of the routine cleaning of a ship is usually accomplished in the morning watch, which is the first mate's, affairs moved smoothly enough on the surface.

Yet day by day the wrinkles that seamed Gatlin's face deepened. He had been a pleasant, genial man on the day the *Durban* left New York. Cole had liked him, even after his cowardice in yielding to Sutson at Punta del Guarda had destroyed respect. But now the skipper kept to his cabin except for an hour at twilight, when he emerged to pace the deck. He commented irritably to Cole on soiled paintwork, yet never ordered him to turn the men to clean it, because he dared not. Sleeplessness made the captain lose weight. His eyes became more and more bloodshot from worry. His fine, big ship was slipping from his grasp. He would never be given command of her again unless in some way he could bribe or cajole the crew into discharging and taking on cargo promptly, and Gatlin knew that to be most unlikely.

The men spoke to him as they pleased. He would cross from one side of the ship to

the other if he saw one of them approach, even if the man was half-witted, inoffensive Harrison, and then turn his head to keep from seeing the grin with which Harrison would greet his timidity. At Freetown, and again at Lagos, the men came aft and demanded liberty and money as soon as the lines were fast. Sutson made the demand with a leer; Gatlin flushed and complied without a word, and each time the crew returned very drunk. They came aboard with their pockets full of bottles to prolong the debauch in the forecastle until dawn, and none molested them. Cole allowed one of the other mates to take the gangway, and hinted it was as well to be inspecting the lines aft when the men came in sight—

He knew that reprimands would accomplish nothing now. Hard-boiled stuff such as he had tried at Teneriffe would mean mutiny; his pistol against the clubs and knives of the crew, and a dead man or two about the decks. The courts would hold him responsible. With a half dozen Nelly Blys in the witness box perjuring against him, he would be fortunate to avoid a conviction for murder; and it was no longer possible to discipline the crew without a fight with deadly weapons and a general brawl. At the beginning only one man had been insubordinate—Sutson. With him down, the rest would have gone to work meekly enough, and they would have waited to see how he fared in a fight before joining in themselves. But now even the ordinarily pacific Harrison was ready to fight at the drop of a hat.

The crew knew the captain was afraid of them, and that he held the mates in check and would not employ hard-boiled methods.

Nevertheless, in a dozen small ways Cole made every man sensible of the fact that he had not surrendered, and that he was unafraid. He joked when he gave them an order, but there was an iron on the tone of the voice that uttered the bantering words, and grim purpose in his eyes belied the set smile on his lips. They remembered the fierce pleasure in his face when Sutson had defied him, his instant leap toward the jagged bottle the big sailor held ready to stab him in the throat. Gatlin had pulled him back that time, but the deck force had seen that the first mate was a dangerous man to cross, and the respect and fear they felt for him alone was the one thing which kept a nominal show of discipline in effect during the fifteen days of coasting down Africa.

The first signs of the Congo were sighted just before breakfast. Sutson had the wheel, and looking up, he saw about three miles ahead a sharply defined belt of discolored water. The ship was sailing over a calm sea of transparent green which suddenly turned to a dark, cloudy, reddish brown. The line of contrast was so sharply defined that in other waters it might have indicated a shoal, and the big seaman turned to Cole, who had the watch, with a look of inquiry.

"Congo River water," said the mate. "Ain't you seen about the same thing, only thicker and yellow-brown against blue water, when you was comin' into New Orleans?"

"Never been there," grunted the big seaman. He studied the discolored sea, scowling, and thought for a moment. "We must be nearly in," he exclaimed. "In port tonight, hey? Hot dog, but I'm dry."

"We go to Boma, eighty miles up the river," Cole replied with malicious satisfaction. "Don't stop long at Banana. That's a little place at the river mouth. We've a bit of cargo and stop there for clearance. On again in two or three hours."

"That's a port, ain't it?" Sutson wanted to know. At the suggestion he would be denied liberty, he eyed the mate truculently, but Cole shrugged and went below to report the landfall to the captain.

As the day wore on he regretted the information he had given the seaman. He found that Gatlin had made up his mind to proceed to Boma and load lumber without delay, yet he knew Gatlin would never have strength of will to deny the men shore leave if the ship stopped. As for the men, they moved about the decks with the briskness that the sight of land always calls forth during a long voyage, but the manner in which they collected into muttering groups, and an occasional violent exclamation audible on the bridge, showed the crew suspected the captain's purpose and were determined not to be balked of their rights.

Sutson tried to buttonhole the pilot when the latter boarded the ship at the mouth of the Congo, but Cole shouldered him off, and hurried the pilot to the bridge.

"A t'ousand regret, M. le Captaine," the little sun-dried Belgian greeted Gatlin.

The pilot was a wisp of a man, scarcely over five feet six from the top of his enormous sun-helmet to the soles of his canvas shoes, which were thickly whitened with pipe clay. He was dressed in white duck, and from a distance might have been mistaken for a fourteen-year-old boy except for a pair of enormous brown mustaches, heavily waxed, that jutted straight out from each side of his sunburned face like a railroad spike driven through a russet apple.

"Ain't you got any krooboys?" asked Gatlin anxiously. "I must have six boys, monsoor, to handle cargo. White men can't work under this sun, and besides, my crew—"

The pilot shrugged and smiled.

"Oh, *non, non, non,*" he cackled. "Ze krooboy, zhey are on ze quay, but *helas!* Zhere is a ship at anchor off ze Point, and until she—"

"Hush!" Gatlin interrupted nervously. "Not so loud, Pilot. The man at the wheel is listening."

"And for why should he not listen?" exclaimed the pilot. However, he permitted the captain to lead him to the extreme end of the bridge, and to beckon Cole to join them.

"Now, what about that ship?" whispered the skipper. "You say she's already anchored off the Point? You mean we can't get in tonight?"

The pilot nodded mournfully.

"You will excuse? Early in ze morning, she will go, but tonight you mus' anchor in ze stream—oh, ze holding ground it is excellent, Captaine; we run a line to a tree on ze bank if you wish, but we mus' go two miles above the town. It is a t'ousand pardons!"

"That's all right—that suits me fine, eh, Cole?" said Gatlin hastily. His eyes shone with pleasure. "One port these —— sogers don't get liberty in, hey?"

"When'll we anchor," Cole asked the pilot. Learning that it would be about sundown, the mate grinned cynically. "I've heard there's crocodiles in the Congo?" was his next question.

"T'ousands," replied the pilot, rolling his eyes upward.

"Come on over near the wheel-house," broke in Gatlin, "and tell me about the crocodiles! I won't lower a boat," he called to Cole. "And let's see if they'll get ashore tonight, hey?"

"It's your party, Captain," said the mate. "I won't have anything to do with it—for lemme tell you, Gatlin, you don't gain anything by putting over a trick on Sutson. You may keep him aboard, but you'll just get him sore and ripe to start ——. I'm going to turn in."

"It's not a port. He's got no right to liberty, and he's been impudent too often!" Gatlin expostulated.

To this Cole responded with a shrug.

"Sutson's got some ——ed elastic ideas of his rights, you'll find," he replied, and could not resist the cruel pleasure of adding, "What's more, he's got your goat."

Gatlin reddened at the taunt and the look of injured reproach in his eyes made Cole ashamed of himself for bullying a helpless old man, even if the skipper's irritable comments during the last week at sea had been almost unbearable.

"If we must anchor in the stream, I'd give the men a boat," the mate suggested in his anxiety to make amends. "They'll be hard enough to handle while we are loading, with krooboys to do part of their work and all, without irritating them."

"Time they learned to obey orders," Gatlin retorted curtly. "No boat is to be lowered, Mister. See to it."

THE ship dropped anchor about two miles above town, close enough to the northern bank of the stream for a line to be carried ashore and tied to a huge tree growing near the water's edge. For this a boat was lowered, and when the men pulled back to the ship they steered under the stern and called for a line in the expectation that the boat would be secured astern.

"Bring it around to the davits," Gatlin shouted over the rail.

Sutson was in the stern sheets, and at the hail his big head jerked upward in surprize. The sun had just set, and the short tropic twilight was merging into the darkness of night. The brown river ran strongly toward the sea, for the tide was going out, and from the marshy ground arose a penetrating smell of damp, growing, and rotting vegetation. Downstream a few lights were visible, but along the bank was nothing but darkness and stirring leaves.

"Why?" Sutson demanded. "We need this boat to get to town, Captain."

"No one goes ashore tonight," responded the skipper emphatically.

"The —— you say," the big seaman swore —under his breath, yet clearly audible. He hesitated, while he debated whether he should obey orders or row for the town without returning to the ship, but, without money, and in dirty dungarees, there would be little fun to be had. He shrugged, and the boat pulled slowly beneath the dangling falls.

"Rig it in, and secure," the captain gloated when it was hoisted.

"Rig it in," Cole repeated grimly, and the boat was pulled inboard and lowered to its blocks. The captain himself darted forward and hooked the gripes, then turned away, grinning and rubbing his hands together. But Sutson stepped directly in his path.

"This is a port," he growled. "We've done our day's work, Captain, and we want our money and a boat to go ashore in."

"It is not a port."

"The anchor's down. That makes it a port," argued the seaman, his voice rising angrily.

The captain stuck out his jaw, and his white mustache bristled as he gave his commands—as he believed, with all the trumps in his hand.

"It is not a port until the ship clears and gets practique—if you know what that is, you Nelly Bly!" he snarled. "You get no money, and let me see you dare take a boat against my orders. What's more, I'll tell you for your own good the river swarms with crocodiles."

This news Sutson received with a frown. He still stood so that his body blocked the skipper's path, scowling, and looking from the boat to the river bank and back to Gatlin's weazened face. If he seized a boat, which he had force enough to do, for his shipmates would have backed him, judging from their mutterings and growls, Gatlin could prove a charge of mutiny against him in any court. Sutson was a reckless brute, but he was also a leader of men, and he knew when he was beaten.

"Think you're —— smart—wait, that's all, just wait, you double-crossing rat!" He flung the words into the captain's face, then turned savagely on his heel and strode to the rail, with his back to the crowd. "How about it—don't we get a boat, Mr. Cole, he asked after a second, more mildly, and speaking as one man to another.

"You heard the captain," the mate answered. "And he's giving it to you straight, too. There are crocodiles in the river."

"When was *you* here before?" Sutson sneered, but he slouched back against the rail like a man who has made up his mind to stay in one spot for a long time. "——, but I'm dry!" he muttered.

The crew were still clustered at the rail when Cole turned in about nine o'clock, talking, with their heads close together. Not one of them raised his voice, not one of them laughed, so Cole knew it could be no ordinary forecastle conversation. They were planning something, but nevertheless the mate sought his bunk with a light heart. The crocodiles guarded the river, and if Sutson was imprudent enough to lower a boat it would be the overt act for which Cole was eagerly waiting. Between the mate and the big seaman a day of reckoning was coming, as both knew; and while Cole had no fear of the big man's fists—or the knife he wore down his neck beneath his shirt—still when hard-boiled stuff did break loose the mate wanted it to be under conditions that would justify him in court.

A shore breeze had sprung up about nine o'clock, and though the mosquitoes were bad, it was comparatively cool in the mate's room. He knew when he fell asleep that he would sleep soundly, and it was from the deep slumber of the sailor secure in port that confused shouts and the pounding of feet of men running up and down the deck aroused him. Cole glanced at his watch. Four thirty. He had slept nearly eight hours. He wondered what was wrong to cause all the excitement, but he was too comfortable to move until some one ran noisily to his door and a heavy fist hammered on the panels so violently that the hook by which the door was held ajar was pulled from the wood. As the door flew open Sutson precipitated himself into the room.

"Harrison is overboard—grab yer flash and come, Mr. Cole," he urged.

"Got a boat over yet?" Cole demanded swiftly, seizing his flashlight and jumping for the door without even stopping to put on his slippers.

"No, —— that wrinkled-faced old woman! If he'd put a boat over this wouldn't ha' happened," swore the big man. "He's out there now, the squirt, hopping up and down and twitterin'. That's why I come for you, sir. We need an officer out there."

Cole had reached the ship's side, and now

threw a beam of light over the smooth, sliding water.

"I don't see him," he reported. "Where'd he go over? Port, or starboard?"

"I dunno," said Sutson anxiously.

"You don't know?" exclaimed Cole. "Why, didn't you see him fall?"

"Let's get a boat, quick." Sutson put his hand on the mate's arm and sought to urge him aft, but Cole was so surprized he was unwilling to drop the subject. He shook off the seaman's hand and refused to budge.

"When did this happen? I didn't hear any one call 'man overboard,' " Cole said, with a sudden wild suspicion that all this might be some scheme to seize the ship.

"I dunno. I was asleep myself," Sutson admitted reluctantly. "Yah see, Mr. Cole—well, none o' us heard him. We just heard him sing out for help after he was in the water. —— the Old Man! If he'd given us a boat—"

"Belay that," Cole interrupted sharply. "How'd Harrison get in the water?"

"He swum ashore about ten. He musta been coming back to stand his watch," said the seaman defiantly. "If he drowns it's the Old Man what killed him, the—"

"Stand his watch? But that 'ud be four o'clock," expostulated the mate.

The seaman nodded.

"I was asleep, and the anchor watch—that thick-headed Frederick—wasted time callin' the skipper. I'll push in his face when I get him ashore. 'Twas fifteen minutes after Harrison sung out that they called me, Mr. Cole. Must be half an hour, now. That's why I come fer you. We gotta hunt for him with a boat."

A low whistle was Cole's comment.

"Drowned or safe by now, then," he added, expressing the same thought in words. "Well, he would go ashore. I gave you credit for more sense, Sutson. What'd you let him go for?"

"He could swim like a fish an' I was —— dry," growled the seaman. "The ship had swung over close to the bank. He made it ashore all right—and if that skipper'd give us a boat—"

"Shut up and let's get the boat lowered," Cole interrupted.

They pulled away from the ship and rowed up and down the stream until dawn, shouting and flashing lights. They searched the marshy shore for two miles downstream. They found Harrison's hat washed ashore on a little point; near the ship they saw his footprints where he had floundered through the soft, reddish mud. One set pointed toward town, a second trail led toward the water and ended at its edge. They searched till their voices cracked from the strain of shouting and their arms were weary from the heavy oars; but of Harrison himself, not a sign.

At sunrise Cole pointed the boat's nose upstream. A shrug, a level look and a grim twist of his lips conveyed to Sutson that the mate had abandoned the search. The seaman nodded, and then he suddenly shipped his oar and leaped to his feet.

"He's drowned, shipmates," he shouted out. "The captain murdered him when he wouldn't give us a boat."

A growl of assent arose from the men at the oars.

CHAPTER IV

UNDER THE SUN

COLE returned to the ship with a boatload of sullen, tight-lipped men smouldering on the verge of mutiny. Knowing that an outbreak would occur if Sutson saw the skipper in his present frame of mind, the mate took care to be the first up the ship's side, and to Gatlin's anxious look of inquiry he responded by a shake of the head and a curt,

"Drowned, sir!"

The skipper's weazened face knotted into a deeper maze of wrinkles. For a moment he stood rubbing his rheumatic hands together in indecision; then, as Sutson's head rose over the rail, he turned on his heel and almost trotted to the seclusion of his cabin, from which he issued orders to raise the anchor and drop downstream.

The crew hoisted in the boat with unnecessary violence. Fruhauf turned the steam on the anchor winch so suddenly the heavy engine quivered and stalled, as if he would have enjoyed parting a holding-down bolt or breaking the anchor chain itself. Once under way, the men gathered in the bow and scanned the marshy river banks. There was nothing to be seen but red mud and brilliant green foliage. The sun beat down, stabbing through the thin cotton shirts they wore until the flesh beneath felt hot, though the temperature of the air was but little above ninety.

At the port they rowed Gatlin and the pilot ashore in silence, and the skipper spoke to the Belgian in half whispers, avoiding the eyes of his crew. He was not ashore long, and when he returned six black krooboys came with him.

"These niggers'll do the ship's work, Mister," Gatlin announced to Cole. "Give the crew a rest. They can't work under this sun. The consul warned me to make every one wear sun-helmets constantly."

"Mistake to let them loaf," Cole admonished. "Ought to sweat some of the bad temper out of them. Plenty of work'll keep them from thinking."

But to this suggestion Gatlin replied with an obstinate frown.

"Do you want to try to turn them to?" he asked.

The mate shrugged in his turn and dropped the subject. He was sleepy and cross, and in his heart he also blamed Gatlin for the act of petty reprisal which, however innocent the skipper might be in intention, had been indirectly responsible for Harrison's death. Trouble was coming, and even idleness could make the crew but little worse.

In silence the *Durban* pointed her nose upstream and ploughed up the broad river for forty miles. The sun was hotter in the afternoon. The broad estuary narrowed and the tide became less noticeable with every mile. Dozens of islands began to dot the stream; in places the red cliffs rose steeply a thousand feet above the water, with great boulders poised on the verge ready to fall into the strip of green, marshy vegetation that fringed the river bank. By sunset the ship reached the small village of Matadi, and the hatches were removed preparatory to getting out what remained of the cargo and to take aboard a load of lumber. The six krooboys did the work; the men still clustered in the bow, talking in undertones, and as soon as possible without making it appear to be the generosity born of fear, Cole gave them each a small advance and sent them ashore. For once he wanted them to get drunk, very drunk, to drown their grievance; but the only effect was that on the following day the aching heads and sick stomachs which follow a spree made their tempers worse.

They refused to work—staying in the forecastle—and since he had the krooboys, Cole made no attempt to rout them out. The negroes, somewhat to his surprize, proved intelligent and industrious, and in another day the holds were cleared and the ship began to load lumber. Still the crew sulked, but again Cole was lucky, for black stevedores came aboard to take charge of the winches. The lumber, great loads of light, porous, coffee-colored wood, such as is used to make cigar boxes, and which the krooboys called *okumen*, was towed alongside by a launch and stowed butt to butt in the hold by the use of the ship's machinery. For two days the men continued to sulk and idle in what shade they could find, for the sun on the steel deck made the forecastle unendurable. It was not until the third day that a canoe paddled by four blacks, with a white man wearing a sun-helmet in the stern, came along the *Durban's* gangway and brought matters to a crisis.

The white man mounted the ladder briskly and introduced himself to Cole as an official of some sort. The mate was not familiar enough with French to catch the exact title—and his eyes were on the sheeted burden the blacks were bearing up the gangway. It was a body, Harrison's body, and it was scarcely laid on the deck in the shadow of the bulwark before every man aboard was gathered around it. Gatlin, hurrying forward in his slippers, found the Belgian standing in front of the corpse, frowning in perplexity, and looking out of the corner of his eyes at the two groups which had formed silently behind him. To the left was Cole, with the two mates, Shaunessey and Hooker, and one of the ship's engineers. The engineer caressed a spanner, Shaunessey's fists were doubled, and Cole, though unarmed, was glaring at Sutson—who gave him back look for look. Behind the big seaman was the crew.

"By zhe clo'es we onderstan' he ees your man," the Belgian addressed Gatlin. "We discover heem on zhe bank, in hees ondershirt, wiz two bottles of whisky beneat'. He ees drown', and we t'ink you like to bury heem yours'ef, *hein?*"

"You're —— right we want to bury him," growled Sutson.

The Belgian turned in surprize, for he was well enough acquainted with ship discipline to expect his answer from the captain, not from one of the crew, and the belligerent attitudes of officers and men perplexed him.

"Yes, of course—thanks. You did very

well, sir—yes, indeed—thank you," Gatlin chattered.

"You accep' zhe body, zhen? *Bien!*" ejaculated the Belgian in relief.

He held out a paper which Gatlin glanced at and signed, and then the Belgian hastened from the ship with his four black paddlers trooping down the gangway after him. He was hardly over the side before Sutson spoke.

"The crew's gonna bury Harrison," he said with sullen purposefulness. "You murdered him, you did, and we ain't gonna let you stick him in some hole in the mud. He's gonna get a bang-up, Christian burial if there's one to be had in this God-forsaken place, an' you can chew on that—Captain!"

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Gatlin. He recoiled a step, for the big seaman's speech was a threat ending in a sneer, and he stood wetting his lips nervously.

"You know what I mean. You needn't try to look away, with him lying stiff there," Sutson denounced. "You murdered him, you did, when you made him swim ashore when we had a right to a boat, and you can't ring in no sea burial in this river. Come across, now. We want money to take him ashore and put him in the ground decent."

At this accusation the captain's wrinkled face went frozen white with anger under its tan. He took a step forward with clenched fists and for an instant Cole expected to see the frail old man attempt to knock the sneer off the big seaman's lips. Sutson expected it also, for he grinned evilly and raised his hands, delighted that the fight which had been brewing so long should be precipitated when all of his shipmates were in a mood ugly enough to back him to the limit. But after that one involuntary step the skipper's caution reasserted itself. He stopped, and the blood flooded back until his face was purple as the wattles of a turkey.

"That is outrageous—that is a lie!" he choked. "I am no more responsible than you are—yes, and a —— sight less, you Bowery scum!"

"Yeah?" retorted Sutson, making the interrogation a cool and deliberate insult. "Scum yourself! I'm as good a man as you are, Cap'n, an' I never kep' a boat aboard ship an' sent a pore seaman swimmin' to his death."

"You'll go too far!" the skipper cried wildly.

"Now listen—you an' that bucko mate of yours, too," Sutson interrupted brutally. He glanced at Cole, who had relaxed when the captain had paused in his advance, and who now stood impotent, scowling sourly. "Yah've tried to run a sandy on us an' croaked a man, an' we ain't goin' to stand no more of it. Ain't that so, men?"

"You tell 'im—"

"You said a mouthful."

"You're —— tootin'!"

"That's so!" the crew assented.

"An' we want fifty dollars fer funeral expenses and our advance what's due us, an' we're goin' ashore tomorrow an' put Harrison in the ground decent and proper. Otherwise—"

The tone of the last word was a threat and a challenge which Cole accepted instantly.

"And if we didn't?" he growled.

"Try it and see!" Sutson jeered. "Wait till tonight, an' see if your steering engine works tomorrow an' if you can still use your compass. We'll fix this floating hellship so that Christoper Columbus couldn't sail her. I'm sick o' this palaver—what dye say?"

"No!" said Gatlin.

Sutson shrugged, and with a wave of his hand waved the men behind him in the direction of the forecastle.

"Yah'll change yer tune before eight bells," he threatened as he moved off.

IN HIS turn Gatlin walked toward his cabin, the mates and engineer trooping solemnly after him. The old man's face was pale, save for two crimson spots on the cheek bones, and as he walked he muttered incoherently to himself. Arrived at the cabin, he threw himself on the transom, while the mates settled themselves here and there about the room. It was too small to hold all of them comfortably, and they sat in uneasy attitudes. Cole alone kept his feet. He stood in the middle of the floor, his hands on his hips, facing the skipper.

"Well, you been afraid of trouble, and now it's come," he charged harshly. "You wouldn't declare yourself when you had the chance—you wouldn't let me hit him a sock when it might ha' done some good, and now this gang o' Nelly Blys have mutinied, as near as a crew ever does these days. You're master o' this ship—what's orders?"

"I'd like to put him in irons till he rots," Gatlin replied in a fierce whisper.

"Oh, don't make me laugh," said the mate wearily. "There's seven of us, not countin' you, and sixteen of them, not counting the bosun or the carpenter. An' even those two've been drinkin' like a pair of fish since this war started, and they wouldn't help us, that's sure! We don't dare use a gun, and Sutson's smart enough to know it. Irons? Irons be—blowed! Talk sense, man!"

Gatlin picked at the bottom of his coat without raising his eyes. His stiff rheumatic fingers shook, and his lower jaw trembled with weariness and impotent anger.

"Well, and if that's true, what's hard-boiled stuff goin' to get you, Mr. Cole?" he demanded in a bitter whisper. "You been after me to use strong-arm methods for weeks—and all I want is to avoid trouble. I've tried to make this fine big ship a happy vessel, but no. You and that Sutson have been growling for a fight from the start. He's got a knife and he'll use it in a minute. What'll they say in the office if you get cut up? What'll they do to you, and me, if there's a mutiny?" The old skipper raised a haggard face. "No matter what trouble we have now, it's better'n that will be," he bleated.

"No, you don't see my point," Cole denied. "I don't want to be rough, Captain. Sutson and I've got something to settle, yes, but it wasn't my doing. All I'm looking for is ordinary sea discipline, and nowadays you can't get that by force. The men join a ship expecting to find it. We had discipline as far as Punta del Guarda; then we lost it when you took Sutson's lip. Now it's too late. They're out of hand, and all I say is that the more you give them the more they'll want. They've got to be checked, and licked—by bluffin' them if we can, and with a club if we must. I ain't scared of Sutson's knife, and if you like, the mates and me'll walk the decks tonight and keep that gang of dock rats away from the steam steering engine. But some time you got to declare yourself—an' each time you welch you'll only have to be that much rougher in the end!"

"I wouldn't stand bein' called a murderer," the captain whispered, half to himself. "And I'll give Harrison a decent burial myself. See to it, Mister," Gatlin decided with a feeble bravado which deceived no one, and added, "And now leave me be now. I got a headache, and I feel sick."

It was near sundown when the mates filed out on deck again. No seamen were in sight, and the negro stevedores had taken advantage of the absence of their taskmasters to loaf in the shade of the starboard bulwarks. Cole sent the third mate to the fore-hatch and the second mate aft to resume work, and told the rest to arm themselves and report to him, prepared to be on deck all night. Without any hint from him all the men reappeared in blue uniforms. They were uncomfortable in the hot, moist air along the river, but once darkness had fallen they would be a great advantage if it came to fighting, or if a sailor should try to creep aft to do some stealthy sabotage. Hooker and two of the engineers also brought up pistols, at which Cole shrugged disdainfully. He and Shaunessey simply armed themselves with clubs.

The sun soon set. The stevedores knocked off, leaving the holds nearly full, and went over the side chattering like monkeys in their foreign gibberish, and rolling their eyes at the sight of the silent, watchful officers patroling the decks with sticks in their hands. Supper was carried to the forecastle and eaten with noisy shouts, but no seaman stuck his head out of the doorway. Hour succeeded hour. The mates wandered about the ship, stopping to talk to one another occasionally in whispers, and slapping at the swarms of mosquitoes that had attacked the ship at nightfall.

It was nearly midnight, and they were all drowsy when the forecastle door opened suddenly. A bright light was burning inside and against it Sutson's burly figure, dressed in undershirt and pants, was clearly outlined. He was unarmed. His open hands swung at his sides. He peered out, squinting to accustom his eyes to the darkness, and when he made out the moving figures of the mates he grinned and sauntered forward. Cole laid his club silently on the deck and walked to meet him.

"What's the skipper goin' to do?" he wanted to know.

"Bury Harrison himself," said Cole shortly.

The seaman frowned, and peered around Cole's shoulder into the darkness.

"All up, hey?" he jeered. "Yah can't stay awake all the time!"

He turned, and would have walked away, but Cole halted him with a word.

"Listen!" said the mate. "You can't get away with mutiny, Sutson. You got to toe the mark some time. Quit now. The skipper's all right, and I'm no slave-driver. Come back to work, and nobody'll say anything about the last few weeks when we dock at New York."

"Losin' your nerve?" the big seaman grunted. "You can't soft soap me, Mister—an' I hope you like to prowl around till you're gravy-eyed. Me, I'm goin' to sleep—maybe."

"Well, if you gotta have it, then!" Cole whispered after him from between his teeth as the seaman walked away. Sutson ducked involuntarily, for the mate had spoke as if he had been about to throw something at his enemy's head. Seeing he was not to be attacked, he hastened below, and the light in the forecastle was snapped out—though the door was left open.

Cole watched until dawn. He was red-eyed from strain and the lack of sleep when Captain Gatlin slipped out of his cabin at the first hint of light and trudged mournfully up the deck to his chief officer. The old man's mouth drooped, and his eyes were as bloodshot as if he had had no more sleep than the mate.

"It's no use," he announced without preliminary. "I'm goin' to give 'em an advance, an' fifty, to keep them from wreckin' the ship and doin' thousands of dollars' worth of damage. We're most loaded, Cole. Maybe, then, they'll start work, an' settle down."

Therefore after breakfast it was Cole's duty to stand at the gangway and watch the crew file past. The first pair bore Harrison's body, with mock solemnity; the rest, as they passed, grinned at him. When they reached the shore Sutson threw his arm into the air and the whole crew yelled derisively. Then, quickening their pace, they headed for the nearest grog shop, still carrying Harrison's body with them.

CHAPTER V

OVERTIME

COLE was angry. Sutson's gesture had been in the highest degree insulting, and yet, once the seaman had passed out of his sight, his resentment died away. With the crew absent, the ship felt peaceful for the first time in weeks. There were no lounging men to catch his eye and remind him by their idleness of the smoldering feud and his own impotence. The stevedores had come aboard and climbed down the ladders into the holds, one woolly black head after another dropping out of sight. The winches fore and aft began their chatter—pause—chatter—and the logs rose ponderously into the air and down out of sight into the open hatches. The work moved with extreme slowness, for the negroes were not only unsupervised—enough in itself—but the morning was uncommonly hot and so sultry that the slightest exertion called for mental effort; but it did move without the need of backing each order with a joke and a threat, and the unceasing clash of wills.

The sight of the captain drooping by the gangway swept away the last of the mate's irritation. The skipper was bareheaded, with beads of perspiration bedewing his bald crown. He had torn his shirt open at the neck, disclosing a scrawny throat on which the skin hung loose and flabby with age, and as he caught Cole's eye he flushed and looked away miserably.

"I got a cable from the owners tellin' us to hurry an' finish loadin'," he mumbled. "They ain't satisfied—an' I'm doin' all I can." He frowned, and with the querulousness of weakness and age, added, "You ought to prod these niggers, Mister. They work as though they were half dead."

"White men can't work in this heat," Cole pointed out mildly. "And without some one to set the pace—"

"Why can't you work?" snapped the skipper. "It isn't hot. The thermometer is only 98. Man, at Gulfport and New Orleans I've stowed cargo when it was 119 in the shade."

"Yes, but that wasn't so near the equator," Cole explained. "The sun's almost directly overhead. It isn't the temperature so much, Captain, as the rays on the back of your neck—"

"Nonsense!" the skipper broke in violently. "Don't give me any excuse for plain laziness, Mr. Cole. The owners are objecting to our delay, and loading the ship is in your department."

The skipper's eyes were bloodshot and curiously glazed. They resembled embers that have smoldered until their redness is filmed by a white veil of ashes. His

cheeks were brick-red under their tan, his knotted hands and the lip under the white mustache trembled.

"Must I fight with my officers as well as my crew?" he cried. "I want you to load the forehatch, Mr. Cole. Mr. Shaunessey! Go aft. Mr. Hooker'll run the launch and I'll exercise general supervision. Stir these niggers. The men'll be back by noon, and we can finish and be on our way down river if we show a little Yankee hustle."

"You'd better lie down, Captain," said Cole softly. "Or get a hat, at least."

"I won't lie down," the old man shrilled. "I want to be done with this voyage."

"Is that an order you've given?" Cole asked in the same gentle tone. "I've worked too hard for discipline on the ship to refuse an order myself, but—the men won't be back, Gatlin. And it isn't customary for white men to do manual work on this coast."

"Certainly it's an order!" Gatlin snarled over his shoulder.

His fever and disappointment and chagrin at the victory Sutson had won that morning made him so anxious to begin work that he was already trotting toward his cabin. In a second he emerged with a blue officer's cap jammed on his head, and with an oath which sounded strange on his lips he shoved a stevedore away from the forward winch and swayed up a log with a roar of steam and a rattle of cogs, stopping it at the top of the boom with a jerk that made the masts quiver, and lowering it on the run, with the winch brakes squealing.

"What do you say, Mister? Hop to it!" he complained over his shoulder.

"Let's go!" shouted Cole, always impulsive and impressed by this display of energy. "Captain, to see you declare yourself I'd do more'n work in this sun, even."

The mate's duck coat was tossed on to the deck, he rolled up his sleeves and settled his sun helmet more firmly on his head, and with a yell to Shaunessey to take charge aft, he threw himself into the labor with the unstinted energy of an old-time Navy crew, coaling ship for a record.

Cole was a strong man. There was no fat on his muscular body, yet in five minutes his shirt was wringing wet, and within an hour the pace the weazened little skipper set in the stifling, sultry heat made the mate's knees turn to water, and his head reel. He marveled how the old man stood it, but the skipper seemed made of rawhide. His eyes were glassy. White patches mottled his flushed face, but his skinny arms worked tirelessly, and at any hitch in the loading he came flying to the spot with flaying hands and shrill cries which galvanized the black stevedores.

Noon came, and the panting white men gathered under the bridge where they hoped they could catch a puff of breeze, but not a breath was stirring. The sun beat down and was reflected from the high red cliffs at each side of the river, which looked as hot as if they were the glowing walls of an oven. The lush green foliage on the shore drooped, and when a sweating krooboy brought them food none of the officers could eat.

"Ice water," panted the captain.

Cole frowned and shook his head.

"This is hotter'n a fire-room on the Red Sea, Captain," he demurred. "Bring me water from the scuttle butt, and throw a handful of oatmeal in it."

"Ice water," Gatlin repeated, and when it came he drank glass after glass of it in noisy gulps. "Where's that crew," he demanded between swallows. "They've had time to bury a dozen men."

Hooker, the third mate, fanned himself with his helmet and rolled his eyes in the skipper's direction.

"Black Pete's, I reckon," he grunted. "He sells a booze that would eat the teeth out o' your gums."

"Well, if you know, go ashore and bring them back. Find out if Harrison's buried, and if he is, bring back the crew and tell them to turn-to. I must finish loading today, for—" the remainder of the captain's speech was too rapid and incoherent to be comprehensible.

Cole looked up, puzzled. Gatlin's vehemence, his sudden authoritativeness and energy, were unlike him, out of character.

"Me?" gasped Hooker, sitting up. "Me bring back that gang?" He whistled, and shook his head. "Can't be done, Captain!"

"Will you go?" cried the other, so wildly that Hooker jumped to his feet in alarm, and at Gatlin's blazing look, shuffled off the bridge in the direction of the gangway.

"I'll show them," Gatlin exclaimed—and, though Cole was so tired from his morning's exertions that his only desire was to lie still, the skipper jumped to his feet and strode back and forth from one edge of the

bridge to the other, muttering to himself under his breath.

Within fifteen minutes Hooker was back. He looked angry.

"I saw the priest, and Harrison was decently buried," he began bluntly. "I heard the crew singin' in Pete's as I went by, and when I came back I stepped in. Sutson had that knife he wears down the neck of his shirt in his hand and was waving it around yellin' what he was goin' to do to you, Cole, if you tried to stop him again. The rest were just wild, crazy drunk."

"Did you tell them to come back to the ship at once?" demanded Gatlin.

"I did, sir," said Hooker. He grimaced at the recollection, and he must have taken a malicious pleasure in passing the impudence which had been shouted in his face along to the skipper, for he continued, "They said you was—well, never mind what, and that you could go to hell."

The skipper cursed the crew in shrill falsetto.

"Go back," he ended, "and tell them if they're not on board at once I'll sail without them."

Hooker turned on his heel and walked off, and this time he returned in less than five minutes, grinning to himself.

"They said," he reported as soon as his feet touched the bridge, "that you could do as you pleased. There was quite a lot of language between the 'you' and the 'pleased', but it's immaterial." Hooker reseated himself and resuming his fanning with his hat.

"WHEW! I'm hot," he ejaculated. "Honest, Captain, you can't round to and handle that gang this way all of a sudden. It'll take more than orders to make them toe the mark."

All this while Cole had been lying flat on his back, except when he raised himself on one elbow from time to time to take a sip of oatmeal water. He had been studying the captain narrowly, but had not spoken. At last, he hoped, the worm had turned, and Gatlin had gone on the rampage. Perhaps he would declare himself; and though there had been a feverishness about the skipper's orders that the mate could not account for, he was content to wait as long as matters were moving in the direction he wished. Now, however, Gatlin appeared to be undecided. His spurt of energy was ebbing away, the color of his face had changed from a mottled red to a yellowish pallor.

"They never refused duty outright, before," he stammered.

"If you really want them back, I'll go," Cole interposed.

"Don't do it!" Hooker exclaimed instantly. "They had fifty dollars to spend on booze, and you know what this native brandy is in this heat. Poke your nose in that den and Sutson'll knife you sure."

"He's threatened that once before," said the mate, and was rising leisurely to his feet when the captain unexpectedly slammed his fist on the bridge rail and uttered an exclamation of delight.

"I'll fix the yellow-bellied rats, I will!" he crowed. "Mr. Cole, you're determined to start violence that will lead to bloodshed and discredit me with the owners. I won't have it. But I'll do them a trick that will make them long for handcuffs and jail. I told them if they didn't come back to the ship I'd set sail without them, and by all that's sacred, I will! Like to go ashore? They can stay there, without money, till they rot! Can you officers sail this ship—alone?"

Hooker turned to Shaunessey, and after a moment of thought both nodded, but it was Cole who answered the Captain's feverish inquiry.

"Bein' as the *Durban's* an oil burner, we can," he reflected. "With the boatswain and the carpenter and the cook—one of the mess attendants is a pretty decent Portygee, too—there'll be eight of us on deck. I reckon you'll take a watch, Captain?"

"Of course," Gatlin panted thickly.

"Which makes two watches of four men each," the mate persisted. "Working watch and watch, it's more men than we need. Four of us could handle her, on a bet, for wheel and lookout's all you've got to have, legally. Below, well, that might be more of a jam. But the black gang'll report aboard, I think. After all, they're regular seamen—none of this pier-head trash." The mate paused, and frowned while he studied the toe of his shoe. "But—" he began.

"Will you stop talking like an old woman! Will you or won't you?" cried the skipper. "I'm not such an old man yet, Cole. I won't stand any such impudence from any man living as I've put up with—"

"You're talking like a man—too late,"

Cole interposed heavily. "They'll be back by morning, and we can't finish stowing cargo in this heat today."

At this the skipper sprang to his feet.

"Can't we—can't we," he shrilled. "By gad, I say we can!"

Turning on his heel he strode into the cabin and came trotting out with both hands filled with silver trade dollars.

"Oh-hey!" he bawled, in a cracked falsetto which caught the attention of every negro on the ship.

Once their eyes were upon him, Gatlin walked unsteadily to the bridge rail, and raising the money high above his head, the silver clutched in his fingers gleaming in the flood of sunlight, he tossed the coins one by one ringing on to the forward well-deck. A negro whooped and ran for the largesse; before the coins had time to stop rolling a squirming pile of humanity was scrambling and plunging beneath the bridge. Gatlin waited till the struggle was ended; then, when the negroes rose, he advanced to the rail again with a second double handful of dollars.

"See these?" he shouted.

A sibilant murmur arose from the closely packed stevedores on the deck below. White eyeballs rolled in black faces, the crowd packed closer together, each naked body tensed for a leap into the air when the money should fall from the hand of the flushed, glassy-eyed white man who swayed and tottered on his thin legs. But the captain shook his head. One hand made a sweeping gesture, but no money fell; the movement only called attention to the open hatch.

"You put all logs—there," Gatlin promised, speaking slowly and distinctly, and giving the leaders of the negroes time to translate into the vernacular so that all might understand. "Finish before the sun is there—" a gesture of a laden fist toward a point in the sky just above the high red cliffs on the river bank—"and this to every man!" he shook two silver laden fists.

For a breath the blacks stood silent. To them the bribe was so large they were unwilling to believe it was offered in good faith, but something in the captain's burning eyes, the determination on his weazened face, convinced them. They shouted. They leaped into the air, and though the noon hour was not half past they ran toward the hatches.

"Finish?" gibed the captain, turning to Cole. "Do you think they'll finish, with us helping them?"

Cole nodded thoughtfully.

"If flesh and blood can do it," the mate conceded thoughtfully. "I don't like it, though. It's a yellow way to get out of a hole, Gatlin—abandoning a white man in this country. And—I wouldn't work any more if I were you, Captain. The sun—"

"Be —— to your advice," snarled the skipper. "Who's pussy-footing now?"

CHAPTER VI

COLE SHEDS HIS UNIFORM

FEVERISH, driving toil from shortly after noon until four o'clock. Heat and the acrid smells of sweating flesh; savage guttural cries and the rattle and hiss of machinery, logs rising into the air and thumping into the holds till weariness made their brown shapes writhe before Cole's eyes—so passed the afternoon. Cole worked with all his strength, but after an hour of it he could do no more than make a pretence at supervision, and he marveled at the old skipper's unflagging energy. Gatlin had ripped open his shirt. A log, swinging low, knocked off his cap, yet he never stopped to replace it. His voice cracked from constant shouting, but he drove on at the job as hard as he drove his men. At four a wild yell from Hooker announced that the last log was lifted aboard, but without pause or rest the skipper ordered the hatches put on.

"Send a messenger ashore to tell the men we sail immediately," he croaked to Cole. "I'm going ashore to get clearance papers."

Without waiting for the mate to reply he went running off through the heat. Cole watched his figure disappear up the single street that ran down to the water's edge, and scrubbed at his forehead with a sodden handkerchief.

"There'll be trouble over this, later," he muttered to himself. "Can't abandon a crew this way, even if they do deserve it. Gotta put them in the wrong."

He tried to think, but he was so tired he found the effort all but impossible, and it was not until he had dipped up a bucket of water from the river and poured it over his shoulders that his head cleared. The water was almost as warm as blood.

"Written orders—that's the thing," he

told himself. Going to the chart-room he obtained a sheet of paper, and began to write,

Boma, August 9, 1920.

Cargo is loaded. We sail in half an hour, at four thirty. Your shore leave ended at noon. Mr. Hooker told you this. If you are not on board at once we sail without you.

THOMAS F. COLE, Chief Officer.

Cole read over what he had written and at last nodded slowly. It would do, he thought, and he walked to the door and beckoned to the boatswain—a red-headed old seaman who had gone ashore in the morning because he liked liquor too well to forego it, but whose sense of discipline was strong enough to bring him back to the ship shortly after Hooker had delivered the message at noon.

"Now, Sweeney, read this over," said Cole earnestly. "I want you to take it to those men ashore—give it to Sutson, for the rest'll do whatever he does. Tell him that the skipper's got his back up, and means what he says. I'm puttin' it to you straight. I think myself it's a dirty trick, but we're going to sail. And listen! I want you to make sure Sutson does see this—you can tell him that. So here's a pencil. Tell him I don't think he's man enough to sign that and send it back, and that he better come running. Tell him just that way, will you?"

"Yis, sor," said the boatswain. "Do ye think the skipper will sail now, sor, fer a fact?"

The mate shrugged, and Sweeney started for shore, passing the skipper, who was on his way back to the ship, at the foot of the gangway.

"I sent a nigger into that rum shop to tell 'em to hurry," Gatlin called out as Cole approached. "Ain't you ready with those hatches?"

"Cast off now if you say so, sir," Cole replied.

The skipper pulled himself feebly up the gangway by the man-ropes, and tottered to the rail at the mate's side.

"Better wait for the crew," he vacillated. "I feel sick, Mister. My head's on fire, like."

"You been out of your head since noon," declared the mate, and was rewarded by a venomous glance. "Well, it'll soon be over. I sent a message ashore, and I see the bosun coming back with it now."

"Message?" inquired Gatlin. As the boatswain mounted the gangway he took the message from Sweeney's hands. Already it was badly soiled and torn at one corner, and while the skipper was unfolding it Cole noticed how his hands trembled. One glance at the contents seemed to be enough, for Gatlin's jaw sagged disconsolately. He tried to catch his mustache with the teeth of his lower jaw, and failing, passed the back of his hand wearily across his eyes and handed the paper to Cole. Across the bottom were three words written blackly in lead pencil.

Go to ——

"They won't come. —— them, they won't," Gatlin mumbled. For his part, Cole smiled and folded the paper with an air of satisfaction.

"Sutson wrote that?" he inquired of the boatswain.

"Yis, sor," said Sweeney.

"And that," declared the mate, sticking the message carefully away in his pocket, "is evidence in any admiralty court, Captain. Men absent at sailing hour must accept the consequences. Shall I cast off, sir?"

"They won't come," repeated Gatlin in a tone so queer that Cole looked up sharply. What he saw on the seamed, weary features made him spring forward in time to catch the Old Man's falling body in his arms.

"Never—thought—they'd dare," Gatlin muttered. "Don't—can't sail—without them."

"We can handle the ship alone, sir!" expostulated Cole.

Gatlin's head rolled back and forth on his shoulders to express dissent.

"Don't leave without crew," he insisted—and fainted.

"Sunstroke!" Cole muttered. "I knew he was out of his head, the poor —— worm! Here, Sweeney, take his feet and help me carry him to his cabin."

They made the Old Man as comfortable as they could and sent ashore for the doctor, but from the start it was apparent that the skipper had overtaxed his strength so greatly that he would be ill for some hours, if not days. The doctor gave a few simple directions for his care, left medicine to be administered when Gatlin recovered, and walked off the ship calling down anathemas on the heads of white men so foolish as to

flirt with an African sun. He stamped angrily out of the cabin, and the three mates left behind exchanged rueful glances.

"An' now what?" asked Shaunessey. "I almost killed myself workin' this afternoon, an' ye say he ordered us to wait for that mutinous bunch of booze hoisters? Wait how long? They got lots of money an' they won't be back till it's spent. Meanwhile—" the second mate started as the thought crossed his mind; he stared from the unconscious skipper to Cole, and back again. "Meanwhile," he continued suggestively, one dirty hand rasping the red stubble on his chin, "with the captain sick, Cole—you're skipper." Shaunessey grinned and executed an awkward salute. "Hatches are secure an' the ship ready for sea, sir," he bantered. "Shall I get under way?"

"By gad, that's so!" said Cole softly. He reflected a moment and then shook his head.

"No, we won't get under way," he decided. "Even if the Old Man is sick, orders are orders, and he told us to wait. But Shaunessey, there's just one thing wrong with this wagon. A ship always takes her tone from the man at the top, and from Punta Del Guarda right down to this minute, every time I shook my fist Gatlin shook his finger, and spoiled things. Now," Cole ended with grim relish, "he can't shake nothin'. If we can't sail till the men get here, the thing to do's to bring them back. Guess a chief officer's got a right to round up his crew, ain't he?"

"Sutson'll knife you!" expostulated Hooker.

"Yeah?" said Cole. "I can lick any man that has to carry a knife."

"Let me go with you, anyhow!" Shaunessey urged, but Cole shook his head.

"You don't understand," he argued. "Me and Sutson have tangled. If we don't settle that, personal, nothin'll be finished."

"But take a gun, then. There's six of them," expostulated Hooker.

"Gun ——!" grunted the first mate. "I never had one—an' I don't want yours, either."

"Take this, then," Shaunessey urged. With the words he pulled a six-inch, leather-covered black-jack made of an ounce of lead at the end of a short shaft of springy whalebone out of his pocket and forced the weapon into Cole's hand.

"It's only sense," he insisted when the first mate frowned and hesitated. "Going alone, you'll have to bluff 'em, won't you? You certainly can't lick six—you'll be darn lucky, Cole, if you can lick Sutson, or Fruhauf either, if it comes to that."

The first mate was on the point of demurring to this, but the lean Irishman gave him no chance for rebuttal.

"So when the first man makes a pass at you," he went on, "if you knock him cold, *crack*, like that, you'll check a rush and the rest will listen to reason. Makes a man stop to think if he sees a shipmate knocked coocoo, and you standing without your hair mussed, even. But if you only knock the man down, and he gets up fighting, they'll gang you as sure as God made salt water. Lemme come along, Cole—I'll stay back, if you like, an' not jump in unless you need me."

The first mate tucked the black-jack into his pocket as much as to admit that Shaunessey had partially convinced him, but to the last request he shook his head.

"I'm not a hard-boiled guy," he replied quietly. "I got a knife scar on my face, yes, but I got it in a brawl in a Buenos Ayres cantina while I was running for the door. I'm not going out now to beat Sutson up, for I know mighty well I'm the one that's liable to be carried back. But that crew has got to be brought up with a round turn. They've been running wild, and they've got to be stopped with a jerk. If one officer, and him the skipper, brings 'em back alone they'll be good boys. If you went along they'd figure I was afraid, and day after tomorrow they might try it all over again."

The mate paused to tighten his belt notch and settle his sun-helmet more firmly on his head.

"I could get those big black police to round them up for me," he added. "But don't call them in even if I get licked, Shaunessey. When the yellin' stops, come ashore and get me, an' then sail. I'd rather take a lickin' than abandon a white man in this steaming hell-hole, but if I am licked, that crew'll be unmanageable."

Shaunessey's face had become as long as his arm. Hooker was wetting his lips nervously, and Cole suddenly realized he was talking them into a blue funk. So he grinned and hit the third mate a hearty clump on the back.

"Come out of it, guy! It'll all be the

same in a hundred years," he encouraged, and started down the gangway alone for the final reckoning, so long overdue.

The men, he knew, were drinking in a mud walled, thatch-roofed hut not far from the river bank and just off the main road. He was glad to see the street was deserted, and when he approached the low, wide doorway of the drinking place, to note that the crew within were quiet. Not an oath, not a shout, not even the maudlin chatter of men deep in their cups.

Perhaps they had drunk themselves sleepy, Cole thought. He walked on tiptoe to the doorway and paused just outside, standing close to the wall. Even though the door was open, it was too dark inside for him to see the men within. He listened. Not a sound but the buzz of insects. Perhaps asleep—perhaps forewarned of his coming, and waiting, with hastily snatched-up bottles and chairs poised, for him to stick his head into that dark interior. For a moment fear ran its cold hands down the mate's backbone, then, welcome for breaking the tension despite its sinister import, a hoarse whisper sounded from within.

"He is so there—see his shadder across the door!"

In one leap Cole crossed the threshold. He expected a blow; it amazed him to find himself in the center of a bare earthen floor, the only man on his feet. From directly in front Sutson glared at him, but the big seaman was sitting on a stool, leaning back against the wall with his arms hanging limply at his sides. He had pulled off his shoes and torn open his shirt for coolness. On the table at his elbow was a dirty glass and a five-gallon jug. The remainder of the crew were lying sprawled on a low, wide bench which ran around two sides of the room.

Cole noticed swiftly that Fruhauf was behind him at his left. Too bad, but it could not be helped. Sutson had grasped the table-edge and was heaving himself to his feet, the other men were stirring. It was time to act. If he cracked Sutson above the ear with the black-jack he would win the fight before the liquor-sodden wits of the crew realized it had begun.

But Cole was not a bucko. The big seaman had not yet reached his feet, and the mate could not ruthlessly strike down a man in no posture for defense. Instead he sprang in, seized the seaman by one thick wrist and jerked him forward with a pull that took every atom of the mate's strength. Cole stepped aside nimbly as the big man's body plunged toward him, stuck out a foot, and as Sutson tripped, gave him a mighty shove in the back that sent the sailor flying head foremost through the doorway out into the road.

"Come on—git going!" shouted the mate. "Gatlin's sick, an' I'm skipper now. On your way, you lummoxes! You're dealing with me!"

The men muttered, they stirred, they looked at one another, but none dared to face Cole's angry glare. The man nearest the doorway slipped to his feet and lurched outside. Cole saw him go from the corner of his eye. He had won—so easily. Before him Fruhauf scowled and edged himself along the bench toward the door.

"Git goin'!" threatened the mate with fierce triumph. Victory, he exulted, without a blow struck.

But he had blundered. He had underestimated his enemy. Fruhauf's eyes flickered to the doorway behind Cole, his thick lips lifted from his teeth in a triumphant snarl, and from the corner where the half-caste bartender crouched arose a bleat of terror. Thus warned Cole whirled, to see Sutson coming back through the door.

The big seaman's nose was bleeding where his nose had plowed the road. Blood and grime mingled in a horrible mask over his face. His shirt hung in dirty tatters from his belt and in his hand was his knife, held like a sword at the level of his hips, the cutting edge upward ready for the Spanish thrust at Cole's abdomen.

"All right—if you *must* have it," gritted the mate—but he was afraid. His hand streaked for his hip pocket. The move saved his life, for Sutson, thinking the mate was going for a gun, stopped short. His charge would have brought him near enough to thrust home before Cole could have pulled his weapon free, but that tenth of a second of delay was enough for him to snatch out the black-jack.

"There!" he shouted, and flung it at Sutson's face.

He missed. The leaden missile flew low, but it hit Sutson at the base of the throat, and behind it came the mate's hundred and eighty pounds in a furious rush. Cole dared not risk a blow. Instead he caught

the seaman's knife arm in both hands, whirled, bringing the arm across his chest, and broke it above the elbow. Sutson screamed as the bone snapped, but Cole caught him under the armpits with both hands and hurled him once more through the door.

The fight was over in the time it had taken Fruhauf to rise to his feet. When Sutson hit the road again the hulking German had taken one step toward the mate, his mighty fists balled—to stop when Cole crouched by the door, and slowly, step by step, danced toward this second adversary.

"So you want it too, hey, Fruhauf?" he gritted.

Fruhauf's fists unclenched. He stepped backward and sidled toward the door.

"*Nein, nein,*" he yammered.

Cole's advance left the exit clear, and the sailor turned and ran, with the three shipmates still in the room tumbling after him. Cole, left alone, rose erect. Now that it was all over, he was trembling with weakness and excitement, and the crack of Sutson's arm, his scream of agony, still rang in his ears, making him a little sick. The mate gave a sigh of fatigue and poured himself half a tumbler of fiery spirits from the jug on the table. It seemed to him to have no more taste and effect than so much water, but it braced him, and he was able to walk out onto the road steadily, stern and scowling.

"I told you to git to the ship," he growled to the men clustered around Sutson, whose face was drawn and twisted with pain.

"Yes sir."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Back to the ship they went, Sutson first, his naked torso streaked with blood and dirt, his lips twisting with the curses wrung from him by pain. A sling hastily improvised from the rags of his shirt held up the broken arm. Five subdued and chastened men followed him, and last, strolling ten feet behind, came Cole.

"How did you do it?" whispered Shaunessey in his ear as the procession filed up the gangway. Cole shook his head to indicate he would explain later.

"Stop!" he rasped to the crew. They halted, wondering.

"Sutson," said the mate sternly, "You said you was as good a man as the captain, an' he let it pass. Now, are you as good a man as me?"

The big seaman scowled sullenly, but refused to answer.

"Are you, you knife-slingin' coward?" growled the mate.

"No," came the reluctant reply at last.

"Then keep it in mind when an officer gives you an order. That'll do—get forward and I'll send you a doctor."

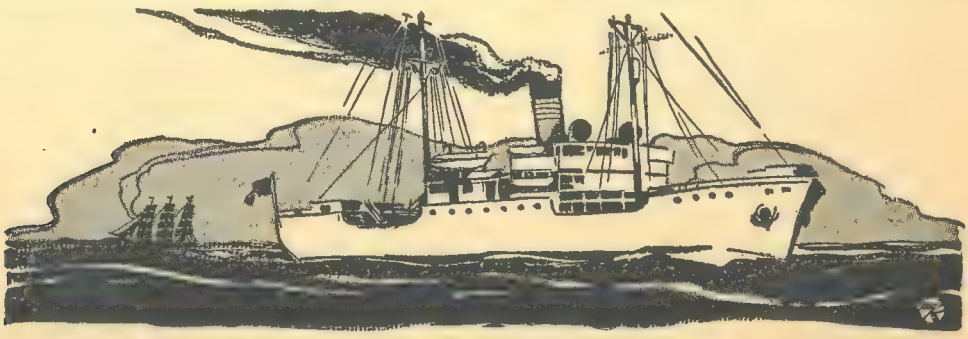
The men trooped away, and Cole relaxed against the rail at the head of the gangway and fumbled in his pocket for a cigaret.

"You know," he remarked, forestalling Shaunessey's torrent of questions, "hard-boiled stuff don't get you nothin'. It takes a good bawling out to sweeten a Nelly Bly. I was thinkin' that those six were walking forward just like that in Punta del Guarda. Only they met the skipper. How is he, by the way?"

"Oh, he's come around," said Shaunessey indifferently. "He'll be pottering around the decks soon. Who cares? What I want to know is how'd you—"

Cole snapped his cigaret over the rail. The sun had fallen behind the cliffs, and in the twilight the smouldering end described a glowing parabola until the water extinguished it.

"You better cast off your lines, Mister," he reproved. "I'll tell you some time, after the ship's at sea."



The Camp-Fire

A free-to-all meeting place for readers, writers and adventurers

Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

ALLOW this procession to parade across our pages—Red Bug, Coloradito, Chigger, Chigoe, Jigger, Beef Worm, Tick. Then, with the help of our comrade in British Honduras, we'll sort 'em out.

Belize, British Honduras.

In Camp-Fire Notes, January 10th, 1925 issue, appear some notes by E. St. Clair Clayton of the Canal Zone which I have read with interest. But it seems to me that he has mixed the Red Bug or Coloradito with Chiggers, Chigoes or Jiggers, with a dash of "Beef Worm" and "Tick."

THE Red Bug is a true bug and though minute is not exactly microscopical. He is capable of causing considerable irritation when he bites you, usually about the legs, which he is apt to do if you walk over low grass in the neighborhood of dwellings. His bite is irritating and raises bumps like that of the flea, and if your skin be tender and you scratch hard and break the skin sores will be caused, and if not attended to will, in all probability, cause a nasty sore. How much this arises from poisonous fingernails or the poison of the bug I do not pretend to know. I have resided forty-two years in Central America and first met with the bug in Livingston, Guatemala, many years ago, which seems infested with them, and since then many times in country places in this colony, but I have not known of its burrowing under the skin. I do not say flat-footed it doesn't but in all my experience, which has been pretty wide, I never experienced nor heard of it doing so. The best treatment for most of these pests is tobacco water, *i.e.* the water in which tobacco has been soaked.

THE Chigger, Chigoe, Jigger or Sand Flea, called by one or other names in different localities, is described in the New Age Encyclopedia as "(*Sarcopsylla penetrans*) American parasitic flea; female buries anterior part of her body in skin, usually of human feet, and becomes greatly distended with eggs."

The Jigger, as we know it here, is generally encountered where pigs are or have been allowed to

wander over loose or sandy soil. Should the lady choose your toe as an incubator, an intolerable itching is set up, and unless care is taken in extracting the sac containing the eggs, buried under the skin, without breaking it, a nasty running ulcer will result which is cured with some difficulty. Should the operation of removing the sac be successful (usually performed with a needle somewhat after the fashion of exploring for a deep sunk splinter) a hole is left in the foot which with but little or no attention soon closes and no after consequences are felt. Pigs are very prone to get them in their feet and, if not attended to, the foot or feet attacked will rot.

THE Beef Worm is usually encountered where cattle graze. It appears to originate from the egg of a fly. Wherever the female fly alights, either on exposed parts or under clothing, she lays a minute egg which in due course hatches into a tiny worm. This at once commences to burrow into its host, man or beast, and rapidly grows into a fairly large white maggot, armed with servicable mandibles with which he feasts on his host. The maggot is covered with short black bristles which make it difficult to dislodge him while alive, save with considerable pain to the sufferer. Outwardly there is usually merely a swelling but there is a small vent through which the pest gets air. To get rid of the worm the practise here is to put a little pitch over the center of the swelling and on top of this a piece of leaf tobacco. This has the effect of killing the worm by shutting off the air supply and it can then be readily squeezed out by gentle pressure without much pain.

I once had three, each about one and a half inches long and a quarter inch diameter, removed from my back at one time and many others at various times from other parts of my body. I once saw a man suffer agony from one lodged in his head and when the remedy was applied the worm was got out with some difficulty, as it was hard to get a hold on it in order to squeeze it out. This was a fairly large one. Many who have had worms have had their friends squeeze the lump while the worm was yet alive, with disastrous results. Either more irritation was set up or the worm was crushed, causing a festering sore which took months to get rid of.

TICKS there are of all sorts, big ones, fat ones and little tiny ones. These ticks seem to be found hanging in bunches on certain shrubs and the mere brushing against one of these shrubs is sufficient opportunity for swarms of them to get on your clothing, thence to your skin. The big ones are readily discerned, but it is the little fellow, especially the one known locally as the "Silver Head," who is hard to find and is not noticeable until he fastens himself on you and commences to distend his body with your blood. Then if you are unwary you scratch or try to pick them off and think by so doing you will rid yourself of the pest. More often than not you break off the body, leaving the head behind to cause a nasty sore which is slow in healing. I have found that if tobacco water be used as soon as ticks are discovered to be on you, whether merely crawling or already fastened, they will all drop off.

MANY years ago I had rather an amusing experience with ticks. I had ridden out one Sunday morning to see a plot of ground which was being cut down to form our new cemetery. The place had been formerly used as a cattle pasture. I did not dismount and simply rode over the place, occupying possibly ten minutes in my survey, as there was nothing to see but fallen bush. On getting home, some half hour later, I was met at the door by my wife, who said "You can't come into this house!" I said, "Why not? What's the matter?" She said: "Before you come in here you must take off every stitch of clothes!" I was more and more astonished at such an order delivered with not a little heat from a wife I had left all smiles not more than an hour before and began to get mad myself until she said "Look at yourself!" I looked and discovered that the new drill suit I had put on only that morning was literally covered with ticks by the thousand. No wonder the lady was mad. She insisted that I stay outside, and any one looking over our back fence at the time might have seen a respectable citizen hastily shedding his raiment to the skin, while his wife, armed with a clothes-pin, superintended the business. But even when stripped I was not allowed to enter the house till I had thoroughly washed myself with a mild solution of carbolic. In the meantime my wife made a bonfire and made a holocaust of my prized drill suit. When it was all over we both had a hearty laugh, and even now the memory of the incident creates mirth, but had we got that lot of ticks into the house it would have been no joke.—P. STANLEY WOODS.

THIS letter from Negley Farson was written a day before an operation on a leg injured in the war—luckily an operation that "looked like a success."

London.

The scene of the *potlatch* is quite accurate, being practically a replica of one I was at—which, by the way, was probably the last one held in Canada, as the Government has forbidden them now. Holding a celebration to pay off one's debts, or to give away all one's worldly goods simply to "acquire merit" being something quite beyond the comprehension of our civilized Solons. And the ministers say there is something ungodly about it.

AS SOON as I am able to get about again I am off for a caravan trip across Asia. If we can get started early enough we go to Turkey, along the Black Sea to Trebizond, and then strike through the passes of Kurdistan for Tabriz and Teheran. From there, as Afghanistan is a closed door from this end, we go south across Persia, and enter India through Baluchistan. I expect the trip to take at least a year.

If this is a bone operation on my leg I may be held up too long, so that we couldn't risk the hot weather of South Persian sands. They say it can knock a man out through his tent—and I don't want to be knocked out. Not by the sun. In that case we might go in through Russia and the Caucasus. This last is conjecture, for, if we are early enough, we shall take the southern route.

It's a trip that I have always been frightfully keen on. I am buying a kit now—but I think that tennis-shoes, shorts, and a whale of a big topee will about fill the bill—that, and actinic shirts.

By the way, if I can be of any use to you or Camp-Fire along the line let me know.—NEGLEY FARSON.

HEAVEN save me from the Irish—or perhaps I should say from the rest of the Irish, being part Irish myself—for I have to let Post Sargent say that St. Patrick wasn't Irish and have to back him up in that statement—St. Patrick wasn't Irish. Luckily most Irishmen know that perfectly well already but there will be some to rise and smite. Just as, after I had at a recent Camp-Fire paid what I thought was a glowing tribute to Ireland's magnificent past, some anonymous Irishman rose and smote me because I'd said that both English and Irish historians being for the most part prejudiced on opposite sides, the safe authorities to consult were the French, German and Italians. Oh well, if after saying anything whatever about Ireland some Irishman didn't rise and smite I'd feel that no Irishman had heard me and that I wasn't among friends.

Just the same, Comrade Anon, while the average Irishman's history of Ireland is rather more to be trusted than almost any Englishman's history of Ireland, it must be taken with some allowance for patriotic enthusiasm. The few exceptions make frank and scholarly use of Zenas, Darmsteter and other "furriners" as recognized authorities. I may have spelt the gentlemen's names incorrectly, for it's years since I've had time to wander in those pleasant fields.

As for the English historians, God save us all from harm! Doubtless there are some who have written of Ireland's past with fairness and understanding, but I didn't find any when I was browsing. Arrah, an' what would ye expect? When Strongbow's Welsh-Normans invaded Ireland they called the inhabitants savages and it's only of recent years the English have begun to recover from the idea, they being what you might call retentive once they have adopted an idea.

Yet those "savages," Strongbow found, supported schools where mathematics, Latin, Greek, astronomy, poetry, philosophy and so on had been taught for centuries. I don't remember about Strongbow's academic education but, if he was a fair sample of his class and generation in England, he probably didn't know a —— thing except how to lick the Irish and build castles to help hold what land he won. The English of the day had these virtues, but in education and little matters of that kind they were nearer to being "savages" than were the Irish.

The above is what I call a grand job. Being a bit Irish, I can't be wholly happy unless a brick is thrown at me every now and then. The above should tide me over quite a long interval, for it's going to bring bricks from both sides of the Irish Sea. Lest the Irish be inclined to leniency, I add that, while part Irish, I'm also part English and part Scotch, not to mention other ingredients.

Throw all the bricks you like, but please don't ask me to argue it out by personal letter. In the first place, I haven't time. In the second, the serious-minded mustn't take me too seriously. Except as to Ireland's culture before the English conquest having been remarkably developed and superior in many ways to England's. But I'll gladly refer you to printed authorities who will argue my case for me. To be inconsistent—and Irish—I'll name one now, an Irishman. Read Dr. Douglas Hyde's "Literary History of Ireland." In it you will find plenty of other references if you wish to go further.

And now let Post Sargent tell you St. Patrick wasn't an Irishman and get his own bricks.

As I have tried to say in my story, Patrick had an adventure that probably came to few in that terrible age of the migrations of the barbarians, to wander across the desolate path left by the hordes of Visigoths.

Most people think of Patrick as Irish. Of course he was not. The chief thing that legend attributes to him was the honor of driving all the snakes out of Ireland. History does not record the event. I think that the story must have arisen from the fact that Patrick took refuge after his escape from captivity in the island cloister of Lerinus. In the beginning, Lerinus had been infested by snakes, so that no man could live there. Honoratus, a monk, took possession of it, drove out the snakes and reclaimed it for cultivation. Hence the confusion. I imagine the snakes were all gone by the time Patrick reached there.—POST SARGENT.

PERSONALLY I can bring forward no testimony worth listening to. Though I'll bet a good baseball pitcher can perform the feat in question and that Camp-Fire can establish even greater skill in knife and ax throwing.

Shelton, Connecticut.

Also, while writing you, I wish to arise and ask for a point of information in Camp-Fire. In a number of stories by Tuttle and other writers mention is made of the skill of various characters in

throwing a knife or ax. How much truth is there in this skill? Is it possible for a knife thrower to strike a target six inches in diameter, seven times out of ten at a distance of say twenty-five feet? Can a man become so skilful with an ax that he can slit a head with a long throw as *Burnham* does in the April 8th issue?

Some issues back you ran a story of the Creek Indians, I think, featuring a scout, *Dale*. "Teeth of the Gar" I think the story was called, in which the statement was made that an Indian could throw his shell tomahawk and decapitate quail. Did you ever try to hit any kind of a bird with a rock or stick? You did not make much of a success of it, did you?

Can any of our best baseball pitchers hit the target six inches in diameter at twenty-five feet seven out of ten?

Understand I am not questioning the veracity of the authors, but just how much skill have these knife and ax throwers. Isn't it somewhat exaggerated?—T. C. Morris.

FOLLOWING Camp-Fire custom, David Clarallan rises to introduce himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine:

Sydney, Australia.

I hadn't expected to try autobiography. But here goes:

Like too many others I drifted into trying fiction through the medium of newspapers and into *Adventure* through looking for adventure. Unfortunately, although I have spent a good share of my time in seeking something exciting, I've had to be content with it at second-hand. In America, in Europe, in Australia and through the East it has been my fortune to be just around the corner from adventures which always happen to somebody else. But the joy of being on the go, of seeing new places, queer peoples and the men who have accomplished what I would like to do is recompense enough for not having done it.

If you care for the bare facts of my existence, I was born in St. Louis twenty-six years ago and when in the States lived in New York, where at present I have no address.

The essentials of the plot of the present story happened to a friend of mine who commanded a steamer on the African coast until the charge of cannibalism made it unhealthy.—David Clarallan.

FROM Ralph R. Perry a word concerning the actual truth back of his complete novelette in this issue:

New York City.

The story is about as true as fiction can be. It has been dramatized very little. With two exceptions the events of the story did take place aboard one ship, on a single voyage—the exceptions being the skipper's illness and the fight, for actually the crew won out at every point, and were last seen gathered about a plate of cocaine in a dive at Hamburg.—Ralph R. Perry.

WHAT were these two people? There are all kinds of legends or reports concerning hidden survivors of both the ancient Aztecs and Peruvian peoples. How much fact may there be behind them?

In the following it is to be remembered that Mr. McDonald saw only the woman and photographs of the man who were being exhibited as Aztecs. Were they ever exhibited in this country and what were they?

Chicago.

In one of your issues of recent months it was stated by one of your contributors that the Aztecs were probably an offshot of the Mayas or an Indian race at one time subject to them who overcame their masters in a decadent age and were themselves destroyed in time for similar cause. In your introduction to the author's statement you stated your impression that the Aztecs were not of Indian origin.

IN THE early eighties, '83 or '84, two Aztecs, male and female, were shown in Scotland by a man and woman who exploited them.

As the story of their discovery and kidnaping goes, rumors of the existence of two Aztec children reached the Gulf Coast. Some adventurers penetrated the hinterland and discovered the two Aztec children, who were posed on the altar of the temple by the priest of the cult as subjects for veneration, possibly—if the traditions of the Aztecs be rightly handed down to us—held until the time for sacrifice to the god came due. The children were kidnaped, and, after a bitter struggle with their pursuers, were brought to the coast, smuggled aboard ship and eventually came into the hands of the couple who showed them.

I entered the showroom, a small hired hall, and remained about two hours. I did not see the man, but his wife was left in charge of the two Aztecs, who stood or moved about at will. The woman in charge was undoubtedly American and had that mezzo quality of voice not uncommon among the women of the native stock of the Middle Eastern States. She was a shrewd, kindly little lady of about five feet four inches, shorter by inches than her female charge.

Let me assure you that the two Aztecs were not "freaks," but well-nourished, splendid types of humans, and came of no weakling stock.

Years must have elapsed between the time of capture and the years when they were shown in Scotland, as both Aztecs had reached their full maturity. The male being thirty, the female twenty-eight—so I judged them to be.

AFTER careful analysis of the physical characteristics of the Aztecs, it may be said that they differed from the Amerindian in many ways and were, in my opinion, an entirely different race from the Red Man—any nation or people of the Amerindians. The head, the features, eyes, mouth and nose, jaw and chin, had no resemblance to any Indian nation or people, or even to the mixed races of the Red

Man, which range from the Slave Lake of Northern Canada to Patagonia in South America. The outstanding difference was in the hair. The hair of the Aztecs, male and female, was alike—a long frizzy, crimpy shock which rose upright from the forehead and temples to the nape of the neck, from six to eight inches long, or high, if you will, and resembled, when viewed from any angle, a huge frizzy pompom. Unusual, of course, but not unbecoming, rather enhancing the cast of features and facial expression.

There is a similarity to the hair of the Aztecs in the hair of some native of the South Sudan—the *Fuzzy-Wuzzy* of Kipling's poem, and also in the hair of some islanders of Melanesia, all of whom are in, or near, the Equatorial belt.

The last I heard of the Aztecs was that, shortly after being shown in Scotland, passage was taken in a freighter for a sea-port in the Southern States and that the freighter was never heard of after leaving the shores of Europe.

There were photos of the Aztecs, single and together, and descriptive booklets.

It seems to me more than probable that, during the time that elapsed between their childhood and their maturity, the Aztecs were shown in the States.

Surely some of your readers can remember and give particulars or send photos.

In hopes of hearing from the readers in an early issue.—JOHN MCDONALD.

THE following letter from D. W. Price is in reply to an answer by Captain Fleischer, formerly of "Ask Adventure," and should be read by all who read the answer in question:

Iowa City, Iowa

I noticed an inquiry from Mr. Leslie C. Moss, of Visalia, California, relative to the "Distinguished Marksman and Pistol Medals." The reply by Captain Fleischer was entirely misleading, due to lack of information on the most sought after decoration in the realm of rifledom.

CAPTAIN FLEISCHER states that Moss' letter "does not say exactly whether or not you refer to marksman, sharpshooter, or expert badges, etc."

Mr. Moss has been very specific in his questions, as there is only one *Distinguished* Marksman and one Distinguished Pistol medal. There are no other medals similar and they are the highest award that it is possible for a military man to win in rifle or pistol fire, and for a man to earn both of these medals is indeed a mark of merited distinction—particularly if they were won prior to 1924, when the rules pertaining to their winning were changed. Mr. Moss is entirely correct when he says "They are dashedly hard to get."

RELATIVE to the "hardness" with which these medals are won will state that I personally know of several riflemen and pistolmen of national fame who have worked years and years and could not distinguish. Captain Fleischer is entirely correct when he says that there is little, if any, honor connected with the marksmen, sharpshooters or expert badges as they are won today, but the Distinguished medals are quite a "bay horse of a different color." I was greatly surprized to see that Captain Fleischer did not recognize the term "Distinguish" as being different from the above medals.

Prior to 1924 (I believe this is the correct date) it was extremely difficult for a man to Distinguish with either arm, and practically impossible for the same man to Distinguish with both, for the rifle and pistol are very unlike in matter of fire, and simply because a man can shoot one arm it is not a criterion that he can shoot the other.

Prior to 1924 it was necessary to win three "legs" (as they are called) before one was entitled to either of the Distinguished decorations. By "leg" is meant that the marksman must have won some one of the following medals in shoulder to shoulder competition: (1) a gold medal in the Regimental or Divisional shoot; (2) a medal in the National individual rifle, or National individual pistol match (if the individual concerned is trying for that particular branch); (3) a medal for shooting member of a winning National team.

THERE are other requisite medals, but I do not recall specifically what they are at this time. Any one of these medals constitutes a leg, but it is necessary to have three legs to win the Distinguish. That's where the catch lies. It is next to impossible to get all three. For example, I know of one instance of a major in the Regular Army who has been a member of several of the infantry teams who has been trying for years and years to Distinguish. He could get one or two legs but that third would not come. As a result that major did not Distinguish until 1924, when the rules were changed. I might state that this particular major is one of the best rifle shots in the United States Army. If I am not mistaken, I think it took him about ten years to finally win that coveted medal. On the other hand, I know of a certain lieutenant of the Engineers who performed the remarkable feat of Distinguishing in one year. He won the gold medal for the regimental troop—he won a gold medal in the National individual rifle match, and he won a medal for being a shooting member of a United States international rifle team which won its competition.

If Mr. Moss has won both the Distinguish rifle and pistol medals, he is indeed to be congratulated, and it rather riles me up to hear any one who is manifestly not well informed make belittling remarks about decorations of this sort.

THE writer of this lengthy letter has been a rifleman in national competition for ten years, and although he has nine legs on distinguish riflemen he is as yet *not* Distinguish. He has shot on two winning international rifle teams, and he is not yet Distinguish. Why? Simply because he is a civilian, and civilians are not eligible to receive the Army decorations. This answers the last paragraph in Captain Fleischer's reply wherein he states "Of course, if you refer to civilian marksmanship, then I plead ignorance." It would strike me that Captain Fleischer should have known not only the term "Distinguish," but also that civilian marksmen were not eligible to receive this award, and that for this reason Distinguish can play no part in civilian marksmanship.

The Army, Navy, and Marine Corps each has a distinctive decoration for Distinguish, although they

are practically the same. I am sorry that I can not give Mr. Moss any history concerning these decorations. Perhaps he might get the desired information by writing the Adjutant General of the United States Army or Mr. C. B. Lister, Acting Secretary of the National Rifle Association, at Washington, D. C.

RELATIVE to the wearing of these medals: Since they are the ultimate in rifle and pistol award, it is not considered proper to wear any other decorations of a like nature at the same time. As far as I know, there is no definite rule or regulation on this point, but it is sort of an implied understanding among military men and it simply isn't being done. Once every year the War Department publishes a list of those men who have Distinguish. I do not know whether or not this is in the *Army and Navy Journal* or whether it is merely in the form of a pamphlet issued by the War Department.

Since 1924, however, the rules relative to the winning of Distinguish have been changed or modified so that now it is much easier to Distinguish than formerly was the case. It is my own personal opinion that the War Department has made a serious error in their new move, because of the tendency to cheapen the award. There is a danger of its becoming too much like the present day expert; in other words, too common. Time was when an "expert" really meant something. Not so nowadays.

I AM rather inclined to believe that the vast majority of older riflemen, both of those who have and who have not Distinguish, are not pleased to see the new law. They have worked hard for their legs and it is not justice to them that the bars be let down to admit those who could not otherwise qualify.

For instance, a certain National Guardsman that I know of is a very fair shot. He does well, but there are just a thousand or so that are as good or even better than he. He always makes the State Guard Team, but he is not particularly noted for his conspicuous action at the National Matches. Just recently he Distinguished; not because he was any whiz of a shot, but because he was admitted under that new rule which says that any member of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps or National Guards who has been a shooting member of a National Match rifle team placing within the first 15 places for three years may Distinguish. Now that doesn't mean much to the old dogs of war who have been plugging for years striving to win individual honors so they can Distinguish. All that is necessary now is for a man to have been a member of a service team which places (mind you, places, not wins), in the National team match three times. This isn't "such a much" when you consider that 15 teams may place. I believe 15 is the number, maybe it is more. The old rule was that the team must be a winning team and not merely a placing team. That is why I say that Mr. Moss is to be congratulated if he won the medals prior to the new rule. If he has won them since, they still represent the highest award, but they are just a trifle easier to get than they were before. They have lost something of their distinction, and it is in my opinion only a matter of time when they will lose most of it if something is not done to remedy matters. It most manifestly is not fair to the old riflemen who have won their medals by sheer individual ability.

ANOTHER aspect that I want to again bring out is that no matter how excellent or able a shot a civilian is, over the same course of fire, no matter how many legs he gets, yet he can not Distinguish because that decoration is strictly military.

The new law while making it fairly easy for the military man to distinguish still acts as a bar to the civilian. It seems to me that this is a rank injustice to a rapidly growing class of marksmen. It would seem that if these same civilians are good enough to compete, shoulder to shoulder with their military brothers, and win the awards in the same matches—and if they are good enough too, in time of national extremity, to form the main body of national defense, then it strikes me they are good enough to receive the award after they have won it.

JUST one other point before I close: Captain Fleischer in the next to the last paragraph says with reference to Springfield rifle, that it is so good that "if one follows instructions and does what one is told, why a miss is an impossible thing; one has to hit the bull's-eye." I can just see some of the old timers smile when they read this. I don't care how good a rifle is, or how expert the individual is, they *all miss* sometimes. They usually miss right where it hurts worst. I know. I have followed the National Matches for ten years and have known personally most of the great shots of that time, and I think I am safe in saying that there is not a single *one* of them who does not miss at times.

This matter of rifle shooting is not automatic. It is a matter of brains, eyesight, nerves, weather, ammunition, and last but not least an element of luck. I have seen many, many men in team matches do just what they were told, but a simple little thing like a puff of wind at the time of letting off the trigger causes the old red flag to say "Swabbo." The best gun in the world would not have prevented that miss. All things being equal, *if* a man has the proper elevation, *if* he has the mirage doped correctly, *if* his windage is correct, *if* he gets his shot off at the proper time, *if* he does not flinch, *if* he holds his breath as he squeezes the trigger, *if* the light does not change unseen, *if* there is no sudden puff of wind in fish-tail, *if* all of these things are as they should be, he will get his "bull," but not otherwise. The trouble is that very seldom are these conditions thus. That is where the skill and brain work come in, to be able to combat the elements and conditions so that the condition for each shot will be relatively the same. Therefore I argue, it isn't all in the rifle or in doing what one is told. You can't always have your coach behind you. That is why there are not more Distinguish marksmen.

I HAVE read *Adventure* rather consistently for a great number of years and I always find the Ask Adventure section of utmost interest. I have come to rely on the aforesaid information. That is the reason I could not help but comment on the above question.

The question was properly and clearly asked. If your expert had been well informed, he would have recognized the term Distinguish as meaning but one thing and he would likewise have known that it could have nothing to do with civilian marksmanship.

If Brother Moss of Visalia is a shooter, I must have seen him at Camp Perry. Anyway, I for one

congratulate him on his two Distinguish medals no matter when he won them.—D. W. PRICE.

SOMETHING from W. Townend regarding his story in this issue:

London, England

Well, maybe Red talks above his station and training, and yet in a way he doesn't, not the Red I have in mind. I didn't actually intend Red to be without education of a kind. He has read a good deal, which is the reason why he is so chockful of theories, etc., but his education has been limited to books and his contact with the world. Maybe I don't say all this in so many words, but I meant Red to be different from the other men he comes in contact with, such as MacTavish, Hartigan, Alf Coley, Moss, and the others.

IN CHAPTER XI, etc., I have tried to show that Jill and her father feel he's too good for his job and wish to get him out of it into something better. He, himself, reveals that he wants books and pictures, he wants to be respected by other men and mix with people like the Farlows, etc. Mr. Farlow wouldn't suggest he should work for his ticket and become an officer if he didn't think there was something in him that made him different from the ordinary deck-hand.

AS PER Camp-Fire custom, things complimentary to the magazine and its writers have been omitted from the following letter, which makes it sound unfriendly. It wasn't.

Pittsburgh.

I have read with interest L. Paul's letter regarding the United States charging Czechoslovaks for transportation, etc.

To Mr. L. Paul, I would say: Learn the true facts, and then, if his own house is clean, reform others.

To you, Mr. Hoffman, I would say do not apologize for Americans, somewhat as an American bishop writing in England recently did.

I am enclosing a newspaper clipping from the December 18th, 1925, Pittsburgh *Press*. What do you know about that, L. Paul?—R. W. HOUSTON.

The newspaper clipping follows:

Czechs Will Pay

London, Dec. 18.—The payment of the debt of the Czechoslovak government to Great Britain for transportation of Czech troops from Siberia has been settled. Payment will extend over 30 years. The total debt is about $4,000,000.

I haven't anything to retract. I'm sorry other nations have done as we have done in such matters. I'm glad we are no worse than other nations in this and similar cases and, since it was a Canadian paper that seared us with caustic reproach for collecting from the Czechoslovaks, I'm particularly glad it's Canada's mother country that is here shown tarred with exactly the same brush. I'm glad, too, that the Pittsburgh *Press*, unlike the Montreal *Star*, threw no stones through a glass house. But none of the above makes me alter my very low opinion of extracting blood-money, even though such extraction is entirely sanctioned by Britain, Canada and the United States.

As to my apologizing for my own country, I'll do so any time it needs it, as it does on many counts. I've never pretended to be the kind of American who believes our country is perfect, nor do I consider that kind of American a good American.

It seems only justice that some of the words of the Montreal *Star* on the occasion of the United States' bill against Czechoslovakia, printed by us in a former issue, should now be reprinted in our pages on the occasion of Great Britain's bill against the Czechoslovaks for their trip across Canada.

> America fed these men in Vladivostok, transported them overseas, carried them across the continent in their railways and shipped them back across the Atlantic. They were brothers in distress, men who fought on the side of the Allies, heroes who had been willing to travel half way round the world in their effort to array themselves against their old oppressors and on the side of America and the Allies. They had faced death and certain suffering for the cause, but they must pay the bill. They traveled in American ships, on American railways and were fed by American rations, and Czecholovakia is now presented with an account for $11,000,000 for the accommodation.
>
> Does the hero who carries in a wounded man from the hottest of the fight send in a bill for his services? This is the great romance of the war, and the men are charged by their brothers-in-arms for being transported to the front, where they hoped to be of service in the cause which both the Allies and America had at heart.
>
> Hasn't the bill got into the wrong envelope?

I endorse the stand taken by the *Star*, and believe it will manfully take the same stand now that the shoe is on the other foot.

—A. S. H.

SERVICES TO OUR READERS

Lost Trails.

Old Songs That Men Have Sung, a section of "Ask Adventure," runs in alternate issues from "Lost Trails."

Camp-Fire Stations: Full list in second issue of every other month.

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Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelop and *full* postage, *not attached,* are enclosed. (See footnote at bottom of page.) Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. Be sure that the issuing office stamps the coupon in the left-hand circle.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.**

1. The Sea Part 1 American Waters
BERIAH BROWN, Coupeville, Wash. Ships, seamen and shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, yachting, small-boat sailing; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks. (*See next section.*)

2. The Sea Part 2 British Waters
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, care *Adventure.* Seamanship, navigation, old-time sailorizing, ocean-cruising, etc. Questions on the sea, ships and men local to the British Empire go to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Brown.

3. The Sea Part 3 Statistics of American Shipping
HARRY E. RIESSEBERG, Apartment 330-A, Kew Gardens, Washington, D. C. Historical records, tonnages, names and former names, dimensions, services, power, class, rig, builders, present and past ownerships, signals, etc., of all vessels of the American Merchant Marine and Government vessels in existence over five gross tons in the United States, Panama and the Philippines, and the furnishing of information and records of vessels under American registry as far back as 1760.

4. Islands and Coasts Part 1 Islands of Indian and Atlantic Oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, care *Adventure.* Ports, trade, peoples, travel. (*See next section.*)

5. Islands Part 2 Haiti, Santo Domingo, Porto Rico, Virgin and Jamaica Groups
CHARLES BELL EMERSON, Adventure Cabin, Los Gatos, Calif. Languages, mining, minerals, fishing, sugar, fruit and tobacco production.

6. Islands Part 3 Cuba
WALLACE MONTGOMERY, Warner Sugar Co. of Cuba, Miranda, Oriente, Cuba. Geography, industries, people, customs, hunting, fishing, history and government.

7. ★ New Zealand; and the South Sea Islands Part 1 Cook Islands, Samoa
TOM L. MILLS, *The Feilding Star,* Feilding, New Zealand. Travel, history, customs; adventure, exploring, sport, (*Send International Reply Coupon for eleven cents.*)

8. ★ South Sea Islands Part 2 French Oceania (Tahiti, the Society, Paumoto, Marquesas); Islands of Western Pacific (Solomons, New Hebrides, Fiji, Tonga); of Central Pacific (Guam, Ladrone, Pelew, Caroline, Marshall, Gilbert, Ellice); of the Detached (Wallis, Penrhyn, Danger, Easter, Rotuma, Futuna, Pitcairn).
CHARLES BROWN, JR., Boite No. 167, Papeete, Tahiti, Society Islands, South Pacific Ocean. Inhabitants, history, travel, sports, equipment, climate, living conditions, commerce, pearling, vanilla and coconut culture. (*Send International Reply Coupon for eleven cents.*)

★ (*Enclose addressed envelop with International Reply Coupon for eleven cents.*)

9. ★ Australia and Tasmania
PHILLIP NORMAN, 842 Military Road, Mosman, Sydney, N. S. W., Australia. Customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, history. (*Send International Reply Coupon for eleven cents.*)

10. Malaysia, Sumatra and Java
(Editor to be appointed.)

11. ★ New Guinea
L. P. B. ARMIT, Port Moresby, Territory of Papua, *via* Sydney, Australia. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, inhabitants, history, institutions. Questions regarding the measures or policy of the Government or proceedings of Government officers not answered. (*Send International Reply Coupon for eleven cents.*)

12. Philippine Islands.
BUCK CONNOR, L. B. 4, Quartzsite, Ariz. History, inhabitants, topography, customs, travel, hunting, fishing, minerals, agriculture, commerce.

13. Hawaiian Islands and China
(Editor to be appointed.)

14. Japan
(Editor to be appointed.)

15. Asia Part 1 Arabia, Persia, India, Tibet, Burma, Western China, Borneo
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, care *Adventure*. Hunting, exploring, traveling, customs.

16. Asia Part 2 Siam, Andamans, Malay Straits, Straits Settlements, Shan States and Yunnan
GORDON MACCREAGH, 21 East 14th St., New York. Hunting, trading, traveling, customs.

17. Asia Part 3 Coast of Northeastern Siberia, and Adjoining Waters
CAPTAIN C. L. OLIVER, care *Adventure*. Natives, language, mining, trading, customs, climate. Arctic Ocean: Winds, currents, depths, ice conditions, walrus-hunting.

18. ★ Asia Part 4 North China, Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan
GEORGE W. TWOMEY, M. D., 60 Rue de l'Amirauté, Tientsin, China. Natives, languages, trading, customs, climate and hunting. (*Send International Reply Coupon for five cents.*)

19. Africa Part 1 Sierra Leone to Old Calabar, West Africa, Southern and Northern Nigeria
(Editor to be appointed.)

20. ★ Africa Part 2 Transvaal, N. W. and Southern Rhodesia, British East, Uganda and the Upper Congo
CHARLES BEADLE, La Roseraie, Cap d'Ail (Alpes Maritimes), France. Geography, hunting, equipment, trading, climate, transport, customs, living conditions, witchcraft, adventure and sport. (*Send International Reply Coupon for five cents.*)

21. Africa Part 3 Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Natal and Zululand
CAPTAIN F. J. FRANKLIN, Gulfport and Coast Enquiry Depot, Turnbull Bldg., Gulfport, Miss. Climate, shooting and fishing, imports and exports; health resorts, minerals, direct shipping routes from U. S., living conditions, travel, opportunities for employment. Free booklets on: Orange-growing, apple-growing, sugar-growing, maize-growing; viticulture; sheep and fruit ranching.

22. ✠ Africa Part 4 Portuguese East
R. G. WARING, Corunna, Ont., Canada. Trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc. (*Send International Reply Coupon for three cents.*)

23. Africa Part 5 Morocco
GEORGE E. HOLT, care *Adventure*. Travel, tribes, customs, history, topography, trade.

24. Africa Part 6 Tripoli
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, care *Adventure*. Including the Sahara Tuaregs and caravan routes. Traveling, exploring, customs, caravan trade.

25. Africa Part 7 Egypt, Tunis, Algeria
(Editor to be appointed.)

26. ✠ Africa Part 8 Sudan
W. T. MOFFAT, Opera House, Southport, Lancashire, England. Climate, prospects, trading, traveling, customs, history. (*Send International Reply Coupon for three cents.*)

27. Turkey
J. F. EDWARDS, David Lane, East Hampton, N. Y. Travel; history, geography, politics, races, languages, customs, commerce, outdoor life, general information.

28. Asia Minor
(Editor to be appointed.)

29. Bulgaria, Roumania
(Editor to be appointed.)

30. Albania
ROBERT S. TOWNSEND, 1447 Irving St., Washington, D. C. History, politics, customs, languages, inhabitants, sports, travel, outdoor life.

31. Jugo-Slavia and Greece
LIEUT. WILLIAM JENNA, Fort Clayton, Panama, C. Z. History, politics, customs, geography, language, travel, outdoor life.

32. Scandinavia
ROBERT S. TOWNSEND, 1447 Irving St., Washington, D. C. History, politics, customs, languages, inhabitants, sports, travel, outdoor life.

33. Finland, Lapland and Russia.
ALEKO E. LILIUS, care *Adventure*. History, customs, travel, shooting, fishing, big game, camping, climate, sports, export and import, industries, geography, general information. In the case of Russia, political topics, outside of historical facts, will not be discussed.

34. Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Poland
(Editor to be appointed.)

35. ✠ Great Britain
THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., W. C. 2, London, England. General information. (*Send International Reply Coupon for three cents.*)

36. South America Part 1 Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*. Geography, inhabitants, history, industries, topography, minerals, game, languages, customs.

37. South America Part 2 Venezuela, the Guianas and Brazil
PAUL VANORDEN SHAW, 21 Claremont Ave., New York, N. Y. Travel, history, customs, industries, topography, inhabitants, languages, hunting and fishing.

38. South America Part 3 Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay
WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, care *Adventure*. Geography, travel, agriculture, cattle, timber, inhabitants, camping and exploration, general information. Questions regarding employment not answered.

39. Central America
CHARLES BELL EMERSON, Adventure Cabin, Los Gatos, Calif. Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel; languages, game, conditions, minerals, trading.

40. Mexico Part 1 Northern
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 W. 10th St., Austin, Tex. Border States of Old Mexico—Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Minerals, lumbering, agriculture, travel, customs, topography, climate, inhabitants, hunting, history, industries.

41. Mexico Part 2 Southern; and Lower California
C. R. MAHAFFEY, Box 304, San José, Calif. Lower California; Mexico south of a line from Tampico to Mazatlan. Mining, agriculture, topography, travel, hunting, lumbering, history, inhabitants, business and general conditions.

42. Mexico Part 3 Southeastern
W. RUSSELL SHEETS, 301 Popular Ave., Takoma Park, Md., Federal Territory of Quintana Roo and states of Yucatan and Campeche. Inhabitants, history and customs; archeology, topography, travel and explorations; business conditions, exploitation of lumber, hemp, chewing gum and oil.

43. ✠ Canada Part 1 Height of Land, Region of Northern Quebec and Northern Ontario (except Strip between Minn. and C. P. Ry.); Southeastern Ungava and Keewatin
S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber, customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit. (*Send International Reply Coupon for three cents.*)

44. ✠ Canada Part 2 Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario
HARRY M. MOORE, Deseronto, Ont., Canada. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, mining, lumbering, agriculture, topography, travel. (*Send International Reply Coupon for three cents.*)

45. ✠ Canada Part 3 Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario
A. D. L. ROBINSON, 115 Huron St., Walkerville, Ont., Canada. Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing; farm locations, wild lands, national parks. (*Send International Reply Coupon for three cents.*)

46. Canada Part 4 Hunters Island and English River District
T. F. PHILLIPS, Department of Science, Duluth Central High School, Duluth, Minn. Fishing, camping, hunting, trapping, canoeing, climate, topography, travel.

47. Canada Part 5 Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta
C. PLOWDEN, Plowden Bay, Howe sound, B. C. Climate, prospects, hunting, fishing and yachting.

★ (*Enclose addressed envelop with International Reply Coupon for five cents.*)
✠ (*Enclose addressed envelop with International Reply Coupon for three cents.*)

48. ✠ Canada Part 6 Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and Northern Keewatin
REECE H. HAGUE, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada. Homesteading, mining, hunting, trapping, lumbering and travel. (*Send International Reply Coupon for three cents.*)

49. ✠ Canada Part 7 Southeastern Quebec
JAS. F. B. BELFORD, Codrington, Ont., Canada. Hunting, fishing, lumbering, camping, trapping, auto and canoe trips, history, topography, farming, homesteading, mining, paper industry, water-power. (*Send International Reply Coupon for three cents.*)

50. ★ Canada Part 8 Newfoundland
C. T. JAMES, Bonaventure Avenue, St. Johns, Newfoundland. Hunting, fishing, trapping, auto and canoe trips, topography; general information. (*Send International Reply Coupon for five cents.*)

51. Canada Part 9 New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.
FRED L. BOWDEN, 54 Mason Avenue, Binghamton, New York. Lumbering, hunting, fishing and trapping, auto and canoe trips, topography, farming and homesteading.

52. Canada Part 9 The Northw. Ter. and the Arctic
PATRICK LEE, Tudor Hall, Elmhurst, Long Island. General questions on this territory, especially Ellesmere Land, Baffin Land, Melville and North Devon Islands, North Greenland and the half-explored islands west of Ellesmere. Also Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

53. Alaska
THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 5647 Lexington Ave., Hollywood, Calif. Arctic life and travel; boats, packing, back-packing, traction, transport, routes; equipment, clothing, food; physics, hygiene; mountain work.

54. Baffinland and Greenland
VICTOR SHAW, Box 958, Ketchikan, Alaska. Hunting, expeditions, dog-team work, whaling, geology, ethnology (Eskimo).

55. Western U. S. Part 1 Calif., Ore., Wash., Nev., Utah and Ariz.
E. E. HARRIMAN, 2303 W. 23rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. Game, fur, fish; camp, cabin; mines, minerals; mountains.

56. Western U. S. Part 2 New Mexico
H. F. ROBINSON, 200-202 Korber Block, Albuquerque, N. M. Agriculture, automobile routes, Indians, Indian dances, including the snake dance; oil-fields; hunting, fishing, camping; history, early and modern.

57. Western U. S. Part 3 Colo. and Wyo.
FRANK EARNEST, Sugar Loaf, Colo. Agriculture, stock-raising, mining, game, fur-hunting, fishing, camping, outdoor life in general.

58. Western U. S. Part 4 Mont. and the Northern Rocky Mountains.
FRED W. EGLESTON, Bozeman, Mont. Agriculture, mining, northwestern oil-fields, hunting, fishing, camping, automobile tours, guides, early history.

59. Western U. S. Part 5 Idaho and Surrounding Country
R. T. NEWMAN, Box 833, Anaconda, Mont. Camping, shooting, fishing, equipment, information on expeditions, history and inhabitants.

60. Western U. S. Part 6 Tex. and Okla.
J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex. Minerals, agriculture, travel, topography, climate, hunting, history, industries.

61. Middle Western U. S. Part 1 The Dakotas, Neb., Ia., Kan.
JOSEPH MILLS HANSON, care *Adventure*. Hunting, fishing, travel. Especially, early history of Missouri Valley.

62. Middle Western U. S. Part 2 Mo. and Ark.
JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*. Also the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands; big timber.

63. Middle Western U. S. Part 3 Ind., Ill., Mich., Wis., Minn. and Lake Michigan
JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*. Fishing, clamming, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping, guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, early history, legends.

64. Middle Western U. S. Part 4 Mississippi River
GEO. A. ZERR, Vine and Hill Sts., Crafton P. O., Ingram, Pa. Routes, connections, itineraries; all phases of river steamer and power-boat travel; history and idiosyncrasies of the river and its tributaries. Questions regarding methods of working one's way should be addressed to Mr. Spears. (*See section 65.*)

65. Middle Western U. S, Part 5 Great Lakes
H. C. GARDNER, 3302 Daisy Ave., Cleveland, Ohio. Seamanship, navigation, courses and distances, reefs and shoals, lights and landmarks, charts; laws, fines, penalties; river navigation.

66. Eastern U. S. Part 1 Adirondacks, New York; Lower Miss. (St. Louis down), Atchafalaya across La. swamps, St. Francis River, Arkansas Bottoms, North and East Shores of Lake Mich.
RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif. Transcontinental and other auto-trail tours (Lincoln, National, Old Santa Fé, Yellowstone, Red Ball, Old Spanish Trail, Dixie Highway, Ocean to Ocean, Pike's Peak); regional conditions, outfits, suggestions; skiff, outboard, small launch river and lake tripping and cruising; trapping; fresh water and button shelling; wildcraft, camping, nature study.

67. Eastern U. S. Part 2 Motor-Boat and Canoe Cruising on Delaware and Chesapeake Bays and Tributary Rivers
(Editor to be appointed.)

68. Eastern U. S. Part 3 Marshes and Swamplands of the Atlantic Coast from Philadelphia to Jacksonville
(Editor to be appointed.)

69. Eastern U. S. Part 4 Southern Appalachians
WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, care of *Adventure*. Alleghanies. Blue Ridge, Smokies, Cumberland Plateau, Highland Rim, Topography, climate, timber, hunting and fishing, automobiling, national forests, general information.

70. Eastern U. S. Part 5 Tenn., Ala., Miss., N. and S. C., Fla. and Ga.
HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*. Except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

71. Eastern U. S. Part 6 Maine
DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 70 Main St., Bangor, Me. For all territory *west* of the Penobscot River. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

72. Eastern U. S. Part 7 Eastern Maine
H. B. STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. For all territory *east* of the Penobscot River. Hunting, fishing, canoeing, mountaineering, guides; general information.

73. Eastern U. S. Part 8 Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I. and Mass.
HOWARD R. VOIGHT, 108 Hobart St., New Haven, Conn. Fishing, hunting, travel, roads; business conditions, history.

74. Eastern U. S. Part 10 Maryland
LAWRENCE EDMUND ALLEN, 201 Bowery Ave., Frostburg, Md. Mining, touring, summer resorts, historical places, general information.

A.—Radio

DONALD MCNICOL, 132 Union Road, Roselle Park, N. J. Telegraphy, telephony, history, broadcasting, apparatus, invention, receiver construction, portable sets.

B.—Mining and Prospecting

VICTOR SHAW, Box 958, Ketchikan, Alaska. Territory anywhere on the continent of North America. Questions on mines, mining law, mining, mining methods or practise; where and how to prospect; how to outfit; how to make the mine after it is located; how to work it and how to sell it; general geology necessary for miner or prospector, including the precious and base metals and economic minerals such as pitchblende or uranium, gypsum, mica, cryolite, etc. Questions regarding investment or the merits of any particular company are excluded.

C.—Old Songs That Men Have Sung

A department for collecting hitherto unpublished specimens and for answering questions concerning all songs of the out-of-doors that have had sufficient virility to outlast their immediate day; chanteys, "forebitters," ballads —songs of outdoor men—sailors, lumberjacks, soldiers, cowboys, pioneers, rivermen, canal-men, men of the Great Lakes, voyageurs, railroad men, miners, hoboes, plantation hands, etc.—R. W. GORDON, care of *Adventure*.

D.—Weapons, Past and Present

Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers, ammunition and edged weapons. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the "Ask Adventure" editor covering the district.)

1.—All Shotguns, including foreign and American makes; wing shooting. JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*.

2.—All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers, including foreign and American makes. DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. 3, Lock Box 75, Salem, Ore.

3.—Edged Weapons, and Firearms Prior to 1800. Swords, pikes, knives, battle-axes, etc., and all firearms of the flintlock, matchlock, wheel-lock and snaphaunce varieties. (Editor to be appointed.)

E.—Salt and Fresh Water Fishing

JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*. Fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting and bait; camping-outfits; fishing-trips.

F.—Forestry in the United States

ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass. Big-game hunting, guides and equipment; national forests of the Rocky Mountain States. Questions on the policy of the Government regarding game and wild-animal life in the forests.

G.—Tropical Forestry

WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, care *Adventure*. Tropical forests and forest products; their economic possibilities; distribution, exploration, etc.

H.—Aviation

LIEUT.-COL. W. G. SCHAUFFLER, JR., 2940 Newark St., N. W., Washington, D. C. Airplanes; airships; aeronautical motors; airways and landing fields; contests; Aero Clubs; insurance; aeronautical laws; licenses; operating data; schools; foreign activities; publications. No questions answered regarding aeronautical stock-promotion companies.

I.—Army Matters, United States and Foreign

(Editor to be appointed.)

J.—Navy Matters

LIEUT. FRANCIS GREENE, U. S. N. R., 241 Eleventh Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. Regulations, history, customs, drill, gunnery; tactical and strategic questions, ships, propulsion, construction, classification; general information. Questions regarding the enlisted personnel and officers except such as contained in the Register of Officers can not be answered. International and constitutional law concerning naval and maritime affairs.

K.-American Anthropology North of the Panama Canal

ARTHUR WOODWARD, Museum of American Indians, 155th St. and Broadway, N. Y. C. Customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions.

L.—First Aid on the Trail

CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D., Falls City, Neb. Medical and surgical emergency care, wounds, injuries, common illnesses, diet, pure water, clothing, insect and snake-bite; industrial first aid and sanitation for mines, logging camps, ranches and exploring parties as well as for camping trips of all kinds. First-aid outfits. Meeting all health hazard, the outdoor life, arctic, temperate and tropical zones.

M.—Health-Building Outdoors

CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D., Falls City, Neb. How to get well and how to keep well in the open air, where to go and how to travel. Tropical hygiene. General health-building, safe exercise, right food and habits, with as much adaptation as possible to particular cases.

N.—Railroading in the U. S., Mexico and Canada

R. T. NEWMAN, Box 833, Anaconda, Mont. General office, especially immigration, work; advertising work, duties of station agent, bill clerk, ticket agent, passenger brakeman and rate clerk. General information.

O.—Herpetology

DR. G. K. NOBLE, American Museum of Natural History, 77th St., and Central Park West, New York, N. Y. General information concerning reptiles (snakes, lizards, turtles, crocodiles) and amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders); their customs, habits and distribution.

P.—Entomology

DR. FRANK E. LUTZ, Ramsey, N. J. General information about insects and spiders; venomous insects, disease-carrying insects, insects attacking man, etc.; distribution.

Q.—STANDING INFORMATION

For **Camp-Fire Stations** write KENNARD MCCLEES, care *Adventure*.

For general information on **U. S. and its possessions** write Supt. of Public Documents, Wash, D. C., for catalog of all Government publications. For **U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries**, the Dept. of Com. Wash., D. C.

For the **Philippines, Porto Rico,** and customs receiverships in **Santo Domingo and Haiti,** the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dept., Wash., D. C.

For **Alaska,** the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For **Hawaii,** Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also, Dept. of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For **Cuba,** Bureau of Information, Dept. of Agri., Com. and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The **Pan-American Union** for general information on **Latin-American matters** or for specific data. Address L. S. ROWE, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For **R. C. M. P.,** Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs.

For **State Police of any State,** FRANCIS H. BENT, JR., care of *Adventure*.

For **Canal Zone,** the Panama Canal Com., Wash., D. C.

National **Rifle** Association of America, Brig. Gen. Fred H. Phillips, Jr., Sec'y, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Wash., D. C.

United States **Revolver** Ass'n. W. A. MORRALL, Sec'y-Treas., Hotel Virginia, Columbus, O.

National Parks, how to get there and what to do when there. Address National Park Service, Wash., D. C.

For whereabouts of **Navy men,** Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department, Wash., D. C.

New Zealand

GOOD fishing.

Request:—"Briefly, what I am anxious to find out about New Zealand is what opportunities there are in connection with the sea—whether there is anything in fishing, or whether one might be able to find an opening for a small motor freighter.

I have been given to understand that there is quite a bit of fishing done round Picton, but I would like to get an idea of what sort of gear is used, and the approximate cost of it. The cost of a boat I can make a fair guess at myself.

I would not care to go farther south, at any rate at first, than Picton on account of the cold. In fact, I should prefer to be as far north as possible.

With regard to the freighting, I expect the whole coast is too well served by steamers for there to be any opening; but although there are plenty of steamers in British Columbia, there were many openings for small vessels where the steamers did not touch.

I am just anxious to get an idea of what opportunities there are, as I want to get out of the tropics for a time at any rate, and could investigate anything that seemed worth while in New Zealand on my way back to British Columbia, in which direction I shall probably head, unless there was some inducement to stay in New Zealand.

Perhaps, if you are not particularly well versed in this line of enterprise, you would be kind enough to put me in touch with some one who could advise me."—T. P. ALEXANDER, Port Moresby, Papua.

Reply, by Mr. Mills:—Fishing in New Zealand! I should say there is—and then some. But I cannot advise Picton, which I know well from personal visits on fishing trips.

There is a whole fleet of motor-boats plying for hire at and fishing from Picton, which is the lovely village situated at the head of Queen Charlotte

Sound. At the entrance to this sound, twenty miles from Picton, there is a whaling station equipped with the very latest and speediest motor craft for hunting the big fellows as they make their annual circuit through Cook Strait, between Picton and Wellington. But, as you surmise, there is good trading and fishing to be done along both coasts of our North Island, despite the fact that small steamships trade out of Wellington—going north—and Auckland (coming south), not to mention Napier on the east coast and Wanganui on the west coast. But what about getting in with the fleet of motors for hire at the grounds along the northern area of our island where the sensational sport of hunting with the rod the fighting mako shark and the swordfish? Zane Grey, who has returned to California, put in four lovely months of hunting the great fish in the Russell area, on the top of the east coast, and then went after the trout at Taupo, inland. He has written a book on the subject. I should say by all means stop off here and look around—to find it worth while.—*Kia Ora.*

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Central America

TRADING—especially with the San Blas.

Request:—"We are three young fellows contemplating a trip to Central America in the Fall. All of us have roughed it at one time or other and are willing to face some hardships in order to have a good or at least interesting time.

Now our plans are, partly at least, already made, but we should like some expert advice in order to have as few disappointments as possible or to avoid complete failure.

First, then, we intend to go to Tampa or some other Southern port and buy a good, husky fishing smack. Since only one of us knows something about navigation, we'll allow about a month to get used to our floating habitation and to fit it up according to our requirements. Then off on the first leg of our trip from Key West to Cuba; from there across the Gulf to Yucatan and down along the coast past Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica to the Canal Zone.

A friend of ours, a sailor, tells us there is a good chance down there for some fellows with a small boat to barter with the San Blas and Darien Indians for coconuts, turtle shell and other goods. He only returned to the States a year ago, so his information, if right, is quite up to date. He explains that a small boat can go where a bigger schooner can not, so that that the little fellow has a lot of chances the other has to forego.

Now our plan of action would be to trade along the coast from Yucatan down, unload our stuff in Colon and after restocking our store, go farther down South again.

Besides trade goods we'd carry a good camera and intend taking pictures wherever we have a chance. Will try to arrange for a market for those before leaving here. We also hope to pick up blankets and curios for the tourist trade in Colon and Panama. We don't expect to get rich in this business, you see Just want an interesting time while paying our way, with perhaps something over for a rainy day.

Now, what do you think of our plans? Can you suggest any improvements? Would say $1,200 be enough to give us a start? Is there anything in fishing, parrot-catching or prospecting?"—J. B., New York City.

Reply, by Mr. Emerson:—Enclosed is a monograph telling of Central America in a general way.

If you go into the trading game, you must be able to understand and speak Spanish understandingly; and "trading" is a very special kind of trick and can not be learned out of books, for one must be a natural trader to succeed, especially among the natives of Central America, as they are shrewd traders.

Your boat must be able to get over the bars along the Caribbean coast. The depth of water is about nine feet, so you must be guided by this fact, if you intend to trade up any of the rivers, as you probably would wish to.

East of the Canal Zone the republic widens out, or in other words, after passing the Isthmus of San Blas (which is narrower than from Colon to Panama City) the country becomes rough and rugged. The San Blas country, proper, begins about sixty miles east of Colon and extends to Honey Shark Point (Cape Tiburon), which marks the boundary between Panama and Colombia, a distance of some two hundred miles, and extends inland to the top of the Chepo range of mountains. From the top of these mountains and extending almost to the Colombian boundary on the Pacific side is the country of the Chucunaques, who are about as hostile as the San Blas tribe.

Some white men and some Chinese have been into that territory to barter and trade and to do a little prospecting, but the land on the coast is under the supervision of their Indian Police, and you will have to go to your boat at sundown, instead of remaining or sleeping on shore in their country. They have many small towns and villages along the coast; they own fair sized sailing vessels and large sailing canoes, and many of them put out to sea and come to Colon in small dugouts for a hundred miles, sailing these with outriggers and showing the greatest skill; they go there to trade with an American who treated them squarely when he traded down their coast years ago.

They have gold dust, rubber, coconuts, tagua, vanilla, sarsaparilla, etc., to trade for such goods as ammunition, firearms, machetes, overalls, and higher class articles than these, such as clocks, furniture, beds, medicines, etc.

They are fair in trade, expecting to pay a rather high price for goods, and will not molest a man if he obeys their principal rules, including the letting their women strictly alone.

The San Blas country is rich in gold and other minerals, according to evidences and meager reports that have been brought out.

As greedy and inhuman as man is to man, it seems that these people deserve praise for having preserved their race and institutions, and should be dealt with in a spirit of kindness, and thus, perhaps, get them to open up their country to commerce. The San Blas are short and stocky of figure, not unlike the Japanese, but have a peculiar shape of head and face, unlike any other race in the world.

In 1921, there were seen four San Blas Indians dressed in the latest fashion of American clothes, walking down Fulton Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. This seems to bear out the tradition that King Carlos sends his young men to learn what is going on in the world.

The traders along the coast stock up on the following articles, viz: Overall pants, blue, small sizes; work shirts; cheap straw hats (haystack style); machetes, cheap watches, alarm clocks, toy sewing machines; cheap sheath knives; pocket knives; calico (loud colors); mosquito netting (plenty of it); needles and thread; sandals and cheap shoes; glass beads; kerosene lamps and lanterns, and a dozen harmonicas, *if* you can play them so as to make the sale.

You can get yourself posted on the prices you can get in New York for the articles they offer (as previously enumerated), by writing or visiting firms handling such goods in New York or other large cities of the U. S. A.

You may have some trouble in getting firearms into any of those countries, as there has been "disturbance" with the Panama authorities not long ago, and the latter may object to your stocking the Indians with weapons and ammunition.

$1,200 *properly* handled in that line of work will give you a big profit, although you will find Syrian and Turk traders, with their baskets on their heads and a blanket roll over their shoulder, will run you a stiff opposition in trading with the natives.

You will derive some income from your cameras, *IF* you can "develop" any "retrato" (photograph) of any of the natives you may take, and sell one to each, as the case may be, for they are fond of being "took." (Pronounced ray-trar-toe.)

Your boat should be of plenty beam so as not to upset in case you get a visitor of the deep that sometimes come aboard uninvited; the draft should be light so that you can get off of shoal places; the center board, and center board-case should be very substantial, for it will catch the very devil in some of the gales you are sure to encounter.

You will find plenty of fishing, more than you will really need or wish.

When near shore you will hear as much parrot music as you need, and in fact sufficient for twenty years afterward.

If I can help you further, please state in your letter as to whether you can speak Spanish, and whether you have had any experience in trading among any peoples other than in the U. S. A.

Montana

FINE for vacations.

Request:—"I have thirty days' vacation in July and have decided to take the wife, car and camp outfit into western Montana. What I especially want to know is where I can go in a car where there is good fishing. I do not care to take pack animals or guide but go some place where there are few tourists and can be reached with the car. Bad roads no bar, so they can be gotten over.

I have heard of the Madison River as a great fishing stream. Is this true?"—S. J. MANN, Tucson, Arizona.

Reply, by Mr. Egleston:—You can camp and fish most anywhere inside a circle in which West Yellowstone is near the south end and Ennis near the north. In this district you will find the Madison and its tributaries, the West Gallatin, Grayling Creek and the headwaters of the Yellowstone all good fishing streams.

Or you can find good country south of the park in Idaho, anywhere north of Ashton.

If you go to West Yellowstone, get permission from park rangers there to camp on Grayling of West Gallatin. To do this you follow the Gallatin Way north toward Bozeman. While this takes you through the park for eighteen miles, it has no connection with the park proper and you do not have to pay park fees. When you leave the park you enter the Gallatin national forest on West Gallatin River, full of fish and with many splendid camp sites, summer homes, "dude" camps, etc. It is ninety-three miles from West Yellowstone to Bozeman on the Yellowstone trail.

Or you can take the Vigilante trail which goes down the Madison through the Ennis country to Butte. This is the road leading northwesterly from West Yellowstone. There are of course many other roads in between and leading from these two main routes which may be traversed and which contain splendid camp sites and good fishing.

Big Boats

THE three largest passenger boats and the three largest freight.

Request:—"Please give me the names of three biggest passenger boats afloat? Name and owners.

Three biggest sailing boats also, names and owners.

Three biggest freight boats.

Your answer is wanted to settle an argument."—INGERSOLL BENEDICTSON. Baldi, Wis.

"P. S.—What is the tonnage, etc., of the *S. S. Dellwood?*"

Reply, by Mr. Rieseberg:—

I am listing the information which you desire relative to certain vessels:

THREE LARGEST PASSENGER VESSELS

1. *S. S. Leviathan* (formerly the German steamer *Vaterland*)

Gross tonnage 59,956. Speed 22 knots.
Net " 27,696. Horsepower 100,000.
Deadweight 16,240. Crew 1,200.
Length 906.9—Breadth 100.3—Depth 23.7.
Passengers (Cabin) 1,517—(Other) 1,880.
Route: New York, N. Y., to Southampton, England.
Owner: United States Shipping Board, 45 Broadway, New, York, N. Y.
Sailing port: New York, N. Y.
Built in 1914 at Hamburg, Germany. Steel.

2. *S. S. George Washington* (formerly German steamer *George Washington*)

Gross tonnage 23,788. Speed 19 knots.
Net " 13,902. Horsepower 21,000.
Deadweight 13,300. Crew 260.
Length 698.9—Breadth 78.2—Depth 23.1.
Passengers (Cabin) 805—(Other) 628.
Route: New York, N. Y., to Bremen, Germany.
Owner: United States Shipping Board, 45 Broadway, New York, N. Y.
Sailing port: New York, N. Y.
Built in 1908 at Stettin, Germany. Steel.

3. *S. S. America* (formerly the German steamer *Amerika*)

Gross tonnage 21,144. Speed 17½ knots.
Net " 12,256. Horsepower 17,500.
Deadweight 12,560. Crew 360.
Length 668.8—Breadth 74.3—Depth 22.8
Passengers (Cabin) 1,042—(Other) 935.
Route: New York, N. Y., to Bremen, Germany.
Owner: United States Shipping Board, 45 Broadway, New York, N. Y.
Sailing port: New York, N. Y.
Built in 1905 at Belfast, Ireland.

THREE LARGEST FREIGHT VESSELS

1. *S. S. Republic* (formerly the German steamer *President Grant*, also formerly the *U. S. Navy President Grant*)

Gross tonnage 17,910. Crew 305.
Net " 10810. I. H. P. 7,500.
Length 599.5—Breadth 68.3—Depth 24.4.
Built at Belfast, Ireland, in 1907.
Home port: New York, N. Y.

2. *S. S. Chilore*

Gross tonnage 13.154. Length 549.6
Net " 8,393. Breadth 72.2
Crew 44. Depth 44.5
Horsepower 5,000.
Built at Alameda, Calif., in 1922.

3. *S. S. Andrea F. Luckenbach*

Gross tonnage 10,725. Length 496.0
Net " 6,826. Breadth 68.2
Crew 50 Depth 37.2
Built at Quincy, Mass., in 1919.
Home port: New York, N. Y.

Relative to the *S. S. Dellwood*, you are advised that this vessel is 3,478 gross tonnage and 2,063 net; length 320.9, breadth 46.0, and depth 29.9; built in 1920 at Oakland, California; home port is Seattle, Wash., has 11 officers on board and 62 in crew and is owned by the United States Quartermaster Corps.

When you get something for nothing, don't make the other fellow pay the postage on it.

The Naval Academy

HOW appointments are made.

Request:—"I wish to find out what the procedure is for one to enter Annapolis and would be interested to have you send me all necessary information."—A. J. PORTER, Racine, Wis.

Reply, by Lieut. Greene:—The U. S. Naval Academy is a school for the training of young men to become officers in the Navy and Marine Corps.

Three midshipmen are allowed for each Senator, Representative and delegate in Congress, one for the Resident Commissioner from Porto Rico, two for the District of Columbia, and fifteen each year from the U. S. at large. In addition, one Filipino is allowed each class. The appointments from the District of Columbia and fifteen each year at large are made by the President. It is the custom to give the appointments at large and those from the District of Columbia to the sons of officers of the Navy, Marine Corps and Army, for the reason that officers, owing to the nature of their duties, are usually not in a position to establish permanent residences.

The selection of candidates, by competitive examination or otherwise, for nomination for vacancies in the quota of Senators, Representatives and delegates in Congress is entirely in the hands of these gentlemen, who may have a vacancy, and all applications for appointments or inquiries relative to examinations should be addressed accordingly. Two examinations for admission are held each year, the first on the third Wednesday in February, the second on the third Wednesday in April. All candidates must be citizens of the U. S. (except the Filipinos), and must not be less than 16 or more than 20 years of age on April 1 of the year that they are appointed.

The law authorizes the appointment of 100 men per year to be selected from the enlisted force of the Navy, Marine Corps and Naval Reserve on active service. This examination is held on the third Wednesday in April of each year. These enlisted candidates must not be over 20 years of age on April 1 of the year they enter and must have been in the service at least one year on August 15 of that year.

The system of alternates, etc., is the same as for West Point.

The physical requirements are that the candidate must be well formed and good physically. Any defect that would unfit him for Naval service will result in the candidate being rejected. The mental examination is in punctuation, spelling, arithmetic, geography, English grammar, U. S. history, world's history, algebra through quadratic equations and plane geometry (five books of Chauvenet's geometry or an equivalent).

Candidates must be unmarried.

The pay of a midshipman is $750 per year, plus 80 cents per day for commutation of rations.

Midshipmen upon graduation are commissioned as ensigns in the Navy, and sometimes to fill vacancies in the Marine Corps and in certain staff corps of the Navy.

Each candidate before admission to the Academy will be required to sign articles by which he binds himself to serve in the U. S. Navy (including the time at the Academy) during the pleasure of the President of the U. S.

Each candidate who has passed the examinations must, before being admitted to the academy, deposit the sum of $100 to cover part of his initial outfit. After being admitted, he is credited with the sum of $250, which is needed in addition to the $100 cash deposit to complete paying for the uniforms, clothing, books, etc. This amount ($250) is deducted from the midshipman's pay in monthly instalments. Any midshipman, however, may immediately after entering the Academy repay this amount in full and thus obviate the necessity of having a certain amount deducted from his pay for this purpose.

A booklet on this subject can be procured by addressing The Superintendent, U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. It is not necessary to include return postage.

If you don't want an answer enough to enclose full return postage to carry it, you don't want it.

Vanilla Planting

A GAME you can still get into. With labor cheap and land sometimes as low as a dollar an acre it looks like an excellent risk for the tropics. Incidentally, how many people know that the flower of the vanilla plant is an orchid?

Request:—"Can you give me any dope on the following questions? Would appreciate any other information regarding vanilla culture.

1. Do you know of any vanilla plantations in South America? Are they small or large holdings? Are they prosperous? Could a fellow obtain temporary employment to learn the ropes?

2. What part of South America is suitable for vanilla culture? Would the climate be healthy?

3. Would it be possible to purchase a small plantation under cultivation? Approximately what capital would be necessary?

4. Could raw land be purchased suitable for vanilla? Any chance of getting experienced help reasonable?

5. Could a fellow with some tropical experience, small capital, get in the vanilla game, or would he be bucking large interests?"—C. R. Gammon, Seattle, Wash.

Reply, by Mr. Edgar Young:—1. Yes, sir; I have seen quite a number of vanilla plantations in South America. Most of them were native owned, some rather extensive, some small. I have also seen them in Central America and southern Mexico. Most of the work on such plantations is done by peons and I doubt you would relish working with them. In fact, I think you can get the experience by theory and by taking a slant at a few plantations before starting in.

2. The hot moist lowlands ranging 20 degrees north and south of the equator.

3. Yes, it would depend on the size. Native owners will sell their plantations and what they would charge is a question too difficult to answer as it depends on various things. For instance a man in Colombia, Central America, or South America would ask in accordance with what land was fetching in his neighborhood. In large boundaries plantations do not cost much per acre. They usually contain several thousand acres, some of them many square miles, as they are owned from former large Spanish grants. A dollar, U. S., per acre up to ten dollars will buy large tracts in almost any portion of either of the countries I have mentioned. I have seen boundaries of 300,000 acres go for 50 cts., including buildings, etc. It is a question of sparring around to see what you want and then striking a bargain.

4. Latin-American peons are rather lazy and shiftless. They don't cost much and they are not worth much. Some of the plantations have a few hundred that go with the land, practical slaves and serfs to all intents and purposes. It is possibly cheaper in the long run to import West Indian negroes. They are better workers. The United Fruit Co. has found that sleek, quinine fed negroes answer the purpose with them, after they have tried out the natives in many places.

5. You can get in the game all right. It isn't like the banana game, yet.

The following is from Early Vernon Wilcox's book "Tropical Agriculture" published by D. Appleton and Co., New York:

"Vanilla requires a hot, moist climate and much humus in the soil about the roots. Trees, stakes, or trellises for support are distinctly required in the cultivation of this plant. Vanilla is propagated only by cuttings about 3 to 4 feet long which are planted at the base of stakes 9 feet apart both ways or at the base of nurse trees. The cuttings are first rooted in the nursery. Vanilla plants may be pruned back at the age of eighteen months in order to induce a habit of branching or they may be allowed to climb to a height of ten to fifteen feet and to become pendulous from above.

"Like other orchids, the flowers of the vanilla are naturally fertilized by insects but the proper insect species are not everywhere present. Vanilla has been introduced into many countries where its natural insect visitors are not to be found. In practical vanilla growing, hand pollination of the flowers is therefore necessary. For this purpose a pencil or splinter of bamboo is commonly used. The flower is held in the left hand and the lip pressed down so as to expose the pollen masses which are thereupon transposed to the stigma by means of the pencil or bamboo stick.

"Pollination is usually carried on from 7 A.M. to 3 P.M. One man, after sufficient practice, can fertilize five hundred to two thousand flowers per day. The period from fertilization to mature pods ranges from 4 to 9 months, varying greatly in different countries. A good vanilla plant at full bearing may put out as many as two hundred racemes of flowers bearing two thousand to four thousand flowers. In practice, it has been found desirable to pollinate not more than six to ten flowers per raceme.

"The vanilla pods reach a length of four to six inches and are harvested when the tip begins to turn yellow. The curing of the pods is the most important process in the vanilla industry. The pods are dipped in water at a temperature of 195 degrees F. for fifteen to thirty seconds. The pods are then put in an oven for fifteen minutes, then wrapped in blankets and exposed to the sun until afternoon, and then stored in a closed room overnight. This process is repeated for 6 to 10 days at which time the pods become flexible and are of a deep chocolate brown color.

"The fermentation process is then considered complete. The subsequent processes in curing vanilla consist largely in properly drying the pods. For this purpose the pods are exposed in a ventilated drying room for a period of 1 to 2 months. Various other processes have been adopted for sweating and fermenting the vanilla pods to develop the proper aroma. The vanilla plant flowers once a year and begins to bear at the age of three years.

"The world's vanilla crop amounts to about 600 tons of pods annually. Vanilla producing countries at present stand in the following order: Tahiti, Mexico, Réunion, Comores, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius and Ceylon."

Mr. Wilcox was formerly a member of the Department of Agriculture (I don't know if he is now or not) and this department has published numerous booklets which you can get by paying a few cents apiece for them from the Supt. of Documents, Washington, D. C. You ought also to have his book. Try your public library for it or order one. There are other crops it tells how to raise. The

Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Latin American Division, Washington, D. C., will also send you pamphlets dealing with vanilla production and the Pan American Union will supply you with what information they have if you request it through your senator or congressman.

The best looking vanilla I saw in my rambles was in the hot lowlands of the river Guayas in Ecuador. It's right on the equator and was rather unhealthy but conditions are much better there now. This region produces the bulk of the world's *cacao*, or crude chocolate; Panama hat fiber, ivory nuts, bananas, and a host of other things. Uncleared land might be picked up cheap from the government as there is just a plantation here and there. Labor cheap and lazy, better bring negroes from the West Indies.

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Mexico

OUNCES and ocelots for the trapper. Also coyote, skunks, bear, badger, weasel, bobcat, mountain goat and raccoon, with the addition of enough ducks and geese to make a hunters' paradise just one hundred miles south of the U. S. Border.

Request:—"Thanks very much for the information you gave me on trapping in Sonora, Mexico. But now I would like a little more dope on it, and different parts. So I am again taking liberty, and wish you would again fulfil my wants.

I have been told that there are other states that join Sonora state (I think on the east), across from El Paso, Texas, that would give a lot better trapping in parts than Sonora, also better hunting.

Now, I would wish for you to give me your idea of this, as I want to go to the best trapping ground there, but would not care to venture too far down in the interior, but some border state I prefer.

What fur animal is the most valuable in that section?

Isn't beaver and muskrat very plentiful there, also coyote, are there any marten or fishers in the high pine mountains?

What fur animals are to be found there? You gave me the names of a few large Reg animals in your other letter, and named the Ounce. What is it like?

Would licenses cost the same for any other state in Mexico besides Sonora, or is one license good for the whole of Mexico, or a different license for different states?

What would Burros cost each in Mexico, with pack-sacks. Would you advise us to take a Mexican guide along to keep camp or not? And would it be advisable for all of us to talk Spanish if we go, or not?

How are eats down there, are they pretty high, or higher than in U. S.?"—HARRY A. RINGLE, Box 1114, Yuma, Ariz.

Reply, by Mr. Whiteaker:—In the States of Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, and Coahuila are fine hunting, trapping, and fishing. Within a distance of one hundred miles south of the U. S. border in any of these three states you can find plenty of hunting and trapping. In the mountainous sections you would have better prospects than on the arid desert-like plains of Coahuila and Chihuahua. There are several deserts in these two states and water is scarce during the dry season—June to September is the rainy season which is not the trapping season.

THERE are several fur-bearing animals in all of the border states, and some of them bring good prices, but as to which one is the most valuable I can not say.

I have seen a variety of furs stacked in piles ready to be shipped either to the U. S. or elsewhere—among them were coyote, skunks, bear, mountain goat, foxes, squirrel, bobcats, weasel, badger, mountain lion, ocelot (tiger cat), raccoon, and several other smaller animals. There is a hide house in Monterey, one in Chihuahua City, one in Juarez, and one in Matamoras that I know about. If you are in the vicinity of any of these cities, look them up and find out where they get their supply of hides.

There are several large hide dealers in El Paso and from one of these you could find out where the best trapping is in Chihuahua. Write to any or all of these and you may learn of several good sections for trapping near El Paso.

About one hundred and sixty miles south of El Paso is a regular hunters' paradise during the so-called winter season. Ducks and geese and other fowls flock down into this section from the cold north. They rest and multiply in unhunted security. This is in the vicinity of Laguna. You may be able to find most any kind of animal or fowl in this section.

The ounce that you asked about is of the leopard family. The price of hunting license in Mexico is fifteen dollars per year. Good in any of the states and be sure that you get a receipt for your money. Burros are very cheap. If the owners think you want them very much they will double the price that they would sell for. A Mexican likes to bargain—stay with him and offer about only half what he asks.

Mexican money is just about, not quite, half the value of ours (except gold, which is worth the same as ours), and have your money in Mexican and pay in Mexican unless they say American or gold.

BURROS sell for one dollar and a half up to about five dollars; many run wild in the mountains; easy to catch and to break to a saddle or pulling; dangerous to fool with them, for some Mexican may claim them and cause you trouble; get a bill of sale from the one you buy from. Guide would be expensive in more ways than one; a knowledge of Spanish is not absolutely necessary. English is spoken in most sections. Some live cheaper in Mexico than they do in the U. S., they claim, after making a tour of that country. I found that living was cheaper over there.

If you don't want an answer enough to enclose FULL return postage to carry it, you don't want it.

Horned Toads

PLENTY of heat for this parlor pet.

Request:—"I have lately received a horned toad, or horned lizard, as it should properly be called, and am a little puzzled as to the proper care to give it. I have always thought they lived on flies and various kinds of insects, but it is out of the question to secure them in the winter-time.

1. What is the best food I could secure? Would meal-worms do? A man who runs a bird store here advised ant eggs, but it does not eat them.

2. Should the animal have water? If so, in what quantities? How should the water be supplied?

3. Is two or three inches of loose sand sufficient covering for the bottom of the box? Should I provide some kind of vegetation, such as cactus, for shelter?

4. In the event the lizard should refuse to eat, is there danger of it starving to death in a short time?

5. Is it true that the horned lizard is the only surviving dinosaur?"—WILBUR LONG, Independence, Mo.

Reply, by Dr. Noble:—It is amazing how many problems arise in caring for animals and how hopeless one feels when the slightest thing goes wrong. The greatest need of a horned toad is sunshine and warmth—not only an occasional sun-bath but a steady stream of it all day long. His home is a hot desert, and even there he is happiest when the sun is at its height and the sand dazzling with heat. The top of a radiator would probably not prove too uncomfortable for him.

1. Horned toads do live on flies and insects and ought to thrive in captivity on meal-worms. It is not strange, however, that they should tend to fast during the winter months. Reptiles in general can live many weeks without food.

2. Water should be supplied in a very shallow dish, great care being taken not to moisten the sand.

3. Four or five inches of sand would be preferable to two or three. Vegetation is quite superfluous.

4. See answer to Question 1.

5. All dinosaurs departed from this world hundreds, thousands, and probably millions of years ago. Neither the horned toad nor any surviving reptile could safely travel under that name.

I hope your lizard shows better spirits during the spring and summer.

"ASK ADVENTURE" editors are appointed with extreme care. If you can meet our exacting requirements and qualify as an expert on some topic or territory not now covered, we shall be glad to talk matters over with you. Address JOSEPH COX, *Adventure*, New York.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

ANY relatives of John Edwards (son of Richard Edwards), who came to this country about fifty years ago, from Liskeard, Cornwall, England, please write to MRS. WM. BRENTON, 1221 7th Avenue, S. Wausau, Wisconsin.

DANIEL, CORSLEY. Missing since January 27, 1925, brown eyes, bald head, six feet tall. Wife is greatly grieved. Any information concerning his whereabouts write to HERBERT G. LAWS, Cedar Grove, Route 1, North Carolina.

KELLOGG, ERNEST D. Address wanted, supposed to be in Montreal, Canada, is a mechanical engineer.—Write to N. M. D., care of *Adventure.*

KELLOGG, CLEMENT. Last heard of in Georgia, was a salesman.—Write to N. M. D., care of *Adventure.*

SMITH, DR. W. H., dentist. His home was in Kansas and practiced in Radville and Vanguard, Saskatchewan, in 1920 and 1921. Any information *re* his present location will be appreciated by J. R. THORNTON, 326 Park Street, Peterboro, Ontario, Canada.

KIRK, WILLIAM N. 'Black hair, blue eyes. Last heard of September, 1922. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated by his wife and son and daughter.—Address MRS. WILLIAM N. KIRK, North Side, Pgh., Pennsylvania.

LISTER, JOHN or family who came to America fifty years ago from Bridge H, Burnley, Lancashire, England. Inquirer, Etter Ingham, Niece.—Address FRED WIRLD, 302 Maple Street, Kearny, New Jersey.

PRAY, W. H. Used to live at Duluth, 14th Avenue, West. Last heard of in Hawkinson, North Dakota. Anyone knowing his present whereabouts write to ROY MCKERVEY, 421 Liberty Street, Erie, Pennsylvania.

REED, MRS. JACK E. nee Myrtle Viola McFarland. Anyone knowing her whereabouts please write to JACK E. REED, Box 4, Herrin, Illinois.

BRISTON, ROBERT J. It's a long time between letters.—Address E. DANGARD, General Delivery, Aberdeen, Washington.

PRAGAN, JAMES T. Last heard of in Frisco. Please write Pat Callahan, or anyone who can give me his address write to PAT CALLAHAN, 82½ N. Sixth Street, Portland, Oregon.

THOMPSON, J. C. Last seen 29th of December, 1925. Knowledge of his whereabouts would be greatly appreciated by relatives.—Address W. H. WEEKLEY, Yemassee, South Carolina.

PALLAYE, ANDREW J. Former corporal in Co. B., 35th Infantry, Schofield Barracks, Honolulu, Hawaii. Please send your address to your former Buddie.—Address The "Club," care of *Adventure*.

HOFFMAN, MAX. Former corporal in Co. B, 35th Infantry, Schofield Barracks, Honolulu, Hawaii. Please send your address to your former Buddie.—Address "The Club," care of *Adventure*.

SCOTT, O. O. Was first mate in January, 1925, of schooner *Gamble* of San Francisco, owned by his father. Family resides in Mobile, Alabama.—Address J. E. E., care of *Adventure*.

RICHIE, CLARENCE and HAROLD. Please write to your brother.—Address FRANK J. RICHIE, 110 West 123rd Street, New York City.

THOMPSON, ROSS. Discoverer of gold and founder of Rossland, B. C. Last heard of in Nevada some twenty years ago. Any knowledge of his whereabouts will be greatly appreciated by his brother.—WILLIAM THOMPSON, Newton Siding, Manitoba, Canada.

ANY members of the 4th D. H. Q., C. F. C., B. E. F., France, who were at Dax or anywhere around there in 1918-19, also any of the 20th U. S. Engineers who were billetted in the Bull Ring at Dax. Would like to hear from you.—Address DICK LUCAS, 22 Antler Avenue, Toronto 9, Ontario, Canada.

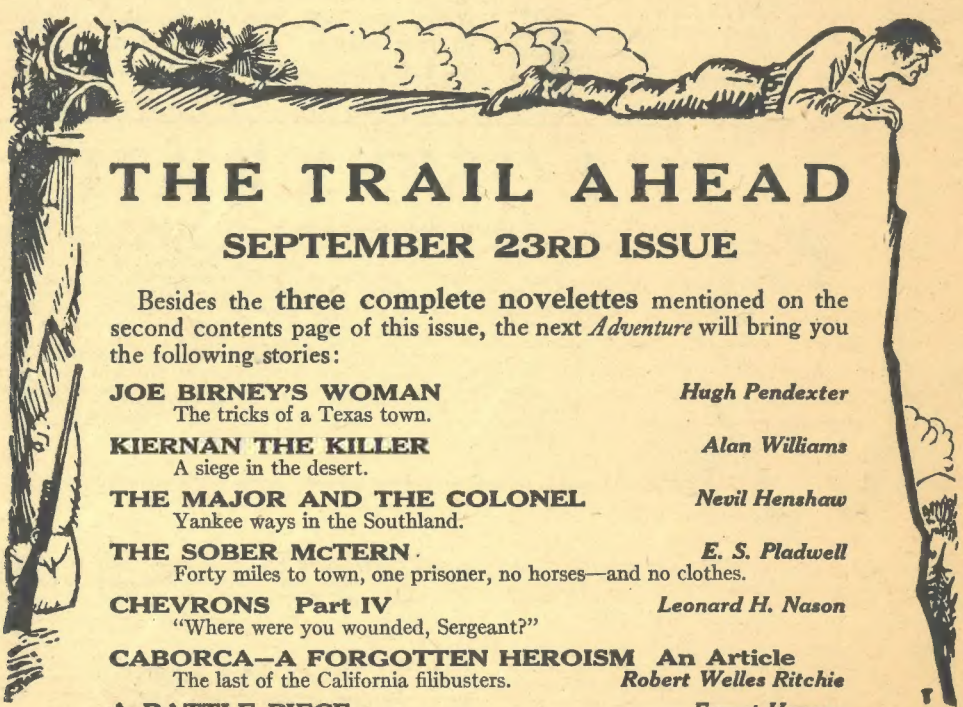
EISSENGARTHEN, GUIDO. Came from Dresden and emigrated to Mexico, have not heard from him in ten years. Any assistance in finding him will be greatly appreciated by his sister, MRS. ELSE TRIDEL, nee Eissengarthen, Geising in Saxony, "Schutzenhaus."

THE following were inquired for in either the July 8th and August 8th, 1926, issues of Adventure. They can get the name and address of the inquirer from this magazine.

ARMSTRONG, "SCOTT" H. (Tiny); Bacchus, John Paul; Bachman, Charles and Emil; Bannon, Charles; Carrier, Roy, L.; Conlogue, Bernard C.; Cooper, Mervin P.; Dean, Homer Thompson; Donovan, Thomas; "Ed Merrick;" Hale, Edna; Holl, Gerald Francis; J. C. L, and the Mrs.; Joe; Justice, Rayborn E.; Knight, Mrs. Anna (Percy) nee Tabel; Lee, Henry; Loan, Mary; O'Rourke, Pat; Patterson, W. L.; Powell, George Francis; Powell, George Carlyle; Pulliam, W. A.; Shatswell, John (Any friends); "Shorty" Koff; Stoolfire, George; Stoolfire, John; Tabel, Carl George Otto.

UNCLAIMED MAIL.

AVIS FERNE, Lawrence Adams.



THE TRAIL AHEAD

SEPTEMBER 23RD ISSUE

Besides the **three complete novelettes** mentioned on the second contents page of this issue, the next *Adventure* will bring you the following stories:

JOE BIRNEY'S WOMAN *Hugh Pendexter*
The tricks of a Texas town.

KIERNAN THE KILLER *Alan Williams*
A siege in the desert.

THE MAJOR AND THE COLONEL *Nevil Henshaw*
Yankee ways in the Southland.

THE SOBER McTERN *E. S. Pladwell*
Forty miles to town, one prisoner, no horses—and no clothes.

CHEVRONS Part IV *Leonard H. Nason*
"Where were you wounded, Sergeant?"

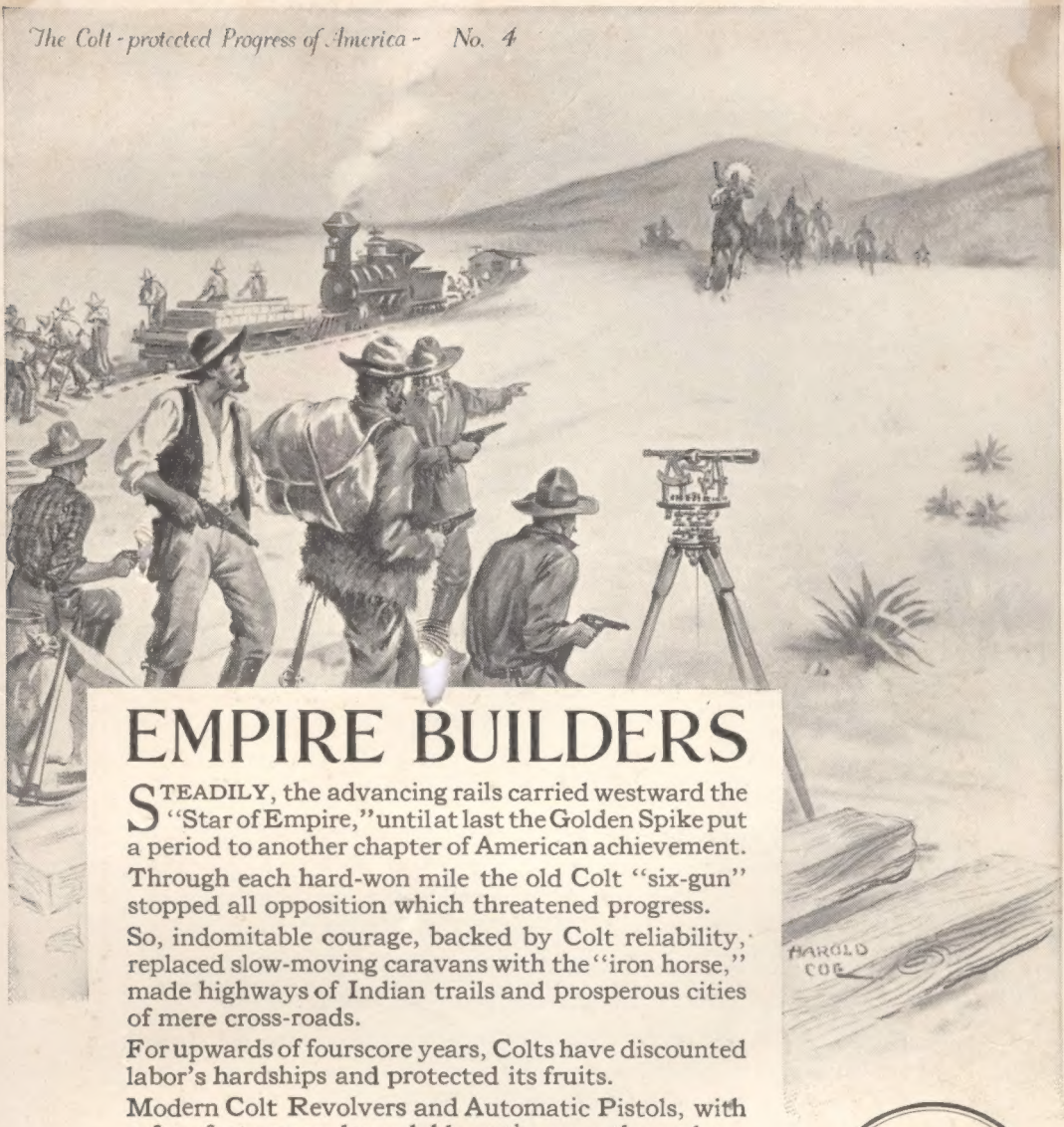
CABORCA—A FORGOTTEN HEROISM An Article
The last of the California filibusters. *Robert Welles Ritchie*

A BATTLE PIECE *Ernest Haycox*
He was good enough at Bunker Hill.

THE WATCH PATH SNAKE A Poem *Helen Von Kolnitz Hyer*

THE TWO ISSUES following the next will contain *long* stories by Georges Surdez, Frederick Moore, Edmund M. Littel, F. R. Buckley, Gordon Young, Arthur O. Friel, Talbot Mundy; short stories by Thomas Topham, H. Bedford-Jones, Captain Dingle, Andrew A. Caffrey, Barry Scobee, Albert Richard Wetjen, L. Paul, Post Sargent, Harvey Ferguson and others; stories of daring men in dangerous places up and down the earth.

The Colt-protected Progress of America — No. 4



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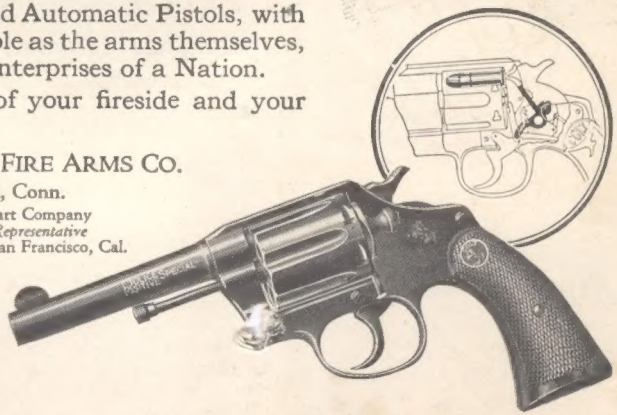

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